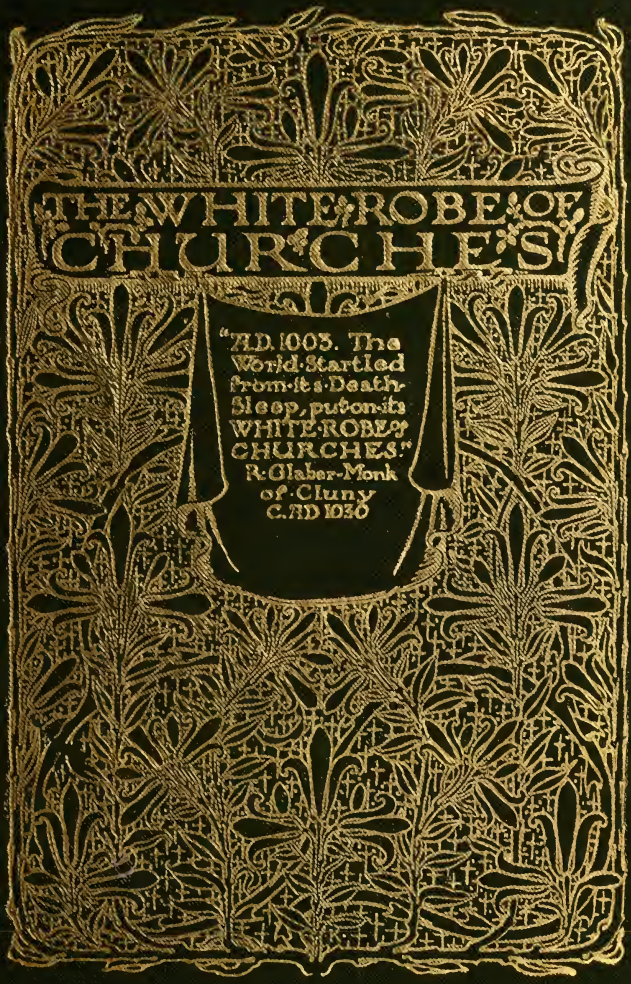
THE WHITE ROBE OF CHURCHES
"A.D. 1003. The World Startled from it's Death-Sleep, put on its WHITE ROBE of CHURCHES."
R. Glaber-Monk of Cluny
C. AD 1030

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THE WHITE ROBE OF CHURCHES

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Gloucester Cathedral.

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THE WHITE ROBE OF CHURCHES of THE XITH CENTURY

PAGES FROM THE STORY OF GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

BY THE VERY REVD
H. D. M. SPENCE, D.D.
DEAN OF GLOUCESTER

"A.D. 1003. *The world, startled from its death-sleep, put on its White Robe of Churches.*"—R. GLABER, *c.* A.D. 1030.

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
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To

H.R.H. the Princess Henry of Battenberg

(*Princess Beatrice of England*)

This study with its quaint but storied title is dedicated.

When your Royal Highness deigned to show me the beautiful ruin of your Castle of Carisbrooke, and dwelt upon its pathetic memories, the profound interest that you felt in the reliques of the great past of England was evident.

In addition to much undeserved kindness, you have now allowed me to dedicate to you this little study of a half-forgotten page of history. I gratefully avail myself of the gracious permission.

H. D. M. S.

The Deanery, Gloucester,
Oct. 1899.

INTRODUCTION

ONE who lives and works day by day in a great mediæval cathedral, whose dwelling is an old abbatial house with a wonderful record of some eight hundred years, can scarcely fail to be influenced by such storied surroundings. The blessed shadow of the house of God always rests on the ancient Gloucester deanery—the home of a long line of abbots, priors, deans—the shadow of a superb house of God, beautiful as in the far-back days of the Plantagenet kings, perhaps even fairer to look on, as far as the outer walls are concerned, for the long centuries of sunshine and of storm have painted the white stone of nave and tower, of transept and of choir, with pale soft colours inimitable in their grey beauty, colours which only the long lapse of time can produce.

Living, working, in such a charmed home, where bits of the wonderful abbey church are ever meeting the gaze, from deanery window, from garden alley, from the quiet city street, questions are ever and again coming up, as, for instance, at what special epoch, and under what special circumstances, were these inimitable mighty prayer-homes built? and what special inspiration fired the builders' hearts? was there any ancient type after which these grand piles

were designed and finished? who were the builders? what of the vanished dwellers in these abbeys and these cloisters? have they any special story?

It was in framing replies to these and many such-like queries that this little book slowly grew into its present form. The glorious cathedrals, the mediæval abbeys, it will be seen, are largely made up of the churches which composed the "White Robe" *of which the Benedictine monk, Raoul Glaber, wrote nearly nine hundred years ago (Glaber's work was put out about A.D.* 1030).[1]

The special inspiration which moved the builders of the churches and abbeys which arose in the world of Western Christendom in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and which are still in large part yet with us, is discussed at some length. It came with the great awakening of the Church after its long torpor or death-like slumber, the result of the barbarian raids which desolated Western Christendom, especially during the ninth and tenth centuries. The builders were in great measure the monastics, *to whom the great revival in question was largely owing, the Benedictine Abbey of Cluny (Burgundy) being the cradle of this new and mighty mediæval monasticism of the West. The principal divisions which made up these vast*

[1] In a strictly accurate sense the exact truth of these words might be challenged. Very few of the churches which Raoul Glaber watched with strange joy and amazement arising so suddenly, remain. Most of them seem to have perished through want of skill in the builders. What we now see were their immediate successors built on the same lines, though larger, built too within a hundred years or thereabouts of Raoul Glaber's own time, but with the experience which disaster had taught.

piles of abbeys and cathedrals are the subject of the next section. A short historical account of the genesis and the development of the crypt, the nave, the transepts, and the choir, with its altar or holy table, together with the rise of the Lady Chapel, the latest development in these prayer-homes, is then given, and these parts of a great church are discussed at some length.

The story of the builders of the great piles, and of the dwellers in the neighbouring cloisters and adjacent rooms and halls leading from the cloisters, forms the next and concluding section—what these men did, and how they worked, is briefly examined, and some of the principal uses of portions of the vast "hives" which grew up around the abbey church are detailed and illustrated.

But the writer feels how sadly insufficient after all are the replies which his little book gives to the questions which are ever arising in the minds of those who love to wander through and meditate in the hallowed precincts of which the book treats. His hope is that the reader, if he be interested in these sketches—they are but sketches—will be induced to search deeper into the lore which has gathered round these sacred half-forgotten subjects; the more he studies, the clearer and more definite will his conviction become of the earnestness, the spiritual fervour, and the true devotion which lived in those ages men are sometimes pleased to call the "dark ages." And while recognising the sad admixture of many errors and grave faults in a religious society which has played so conspicuous, and,

on the whole, so beneficent a part in the story of the past, but which has, as far as England is concerned, passed away for ever, he will acknowledge that in the vanished system of monasticicism, all along its singular history, surely light —true light—alternated with darkness.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION	vii
CHAP.		
I.	THROUGH THE AGES	1
II.	THE MISERY OF THE TENTH CENTURY	11
III.	CONDITION AND INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH DURING THE PERIOD FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF CHARLEMAGNE	15
IV.	THE SOURCE OF THE REVIVAL OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY	21
V.	SOME DETAILS OF THE REVIVAL OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY	25
VI.	THE WHITE ROBE OF CHURCHES	34
VII.	ENGLAND IN THE TENTH CENTURY	42
VIII.	THE WAVE OF RELIGIOUS REVIVAL REACHES ENGLAND	47
IX.	CHURCH BUILDING IN ENGLAND AFTER A.D. 1070	53
X.	THE MEANING OF THE TERM "ROMANESQUE"	61
XI.	THE STORY OF GLOUCESTER	68
XII.	THE CRYPT	77
XIII.	THE NAVE OF GLOUCESTER: ITS ARCHITECTURE AND PROBABLE SCHEME OF COLOUR DECORATION	91
XIV.	THE NAVE: WHENCE CAME THE MEDIÆVAL PASSION FOR COLOUR?	102
XV.	THE NAVE	110
XVI.	DEVELOPMENT OF THE NAVE—ITS SYMBOLISM	122

Contents

CHAP.		PAGE
XVII.	THE TRANSEPT	134
XVIII.	THE TRANSEPT—THE PECULIAR ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST OF THE SOUTH TRANSEPT IN GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL	141
XIX.	THE CHOIR	153
XX.	STAINED GLASS	179
XXI.	THE HOLY TABLE OR ALTAR (1) In the Church of the Catacombs.	210
XXII.	THE HOLY TABLE OR ALTAR (2) After the "Peace" of the Church (A.D. 313).	222
XXIII.	THE LADY CHAPEL	244
XXIV.	THE TOWER—SPIRE—BELFRY—BELLS—ORGAN	268
XXV.	THE CLOISTER	289
XXVI.	ON THE LIFE LED BY THE MONK	321
APPENDIX		338
INDEX		342

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL. (*In Photogravure*) . *Frontispiece*
From a photograph by F. H. EVANS.

GROUND PLAN OF GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL . *To face page* 348
From F. S. WALLER'S "*Notes and Sketches.*"

MOSQUE OF SANTA SOPHIA, CONSTANTINOPLE . . *page* 3

BASILICA OF S. PAUL-WITHOUT-THE-WALLS, ROME . „ 5
From Corroyer's "Architecture Romane."

BASILICA OF SS. NEREUS AND ACHILLES . . *To face page* 6
From Sir G. G. SCOTT'S "*History of English Church Architecture.*"

CHURCH OF S. VITALE, RAVENNA . . . . *page* 7
From CORROYER'S "*Architecture Romane.*"

INTERIOR OF SANTA SOPHIA . . . . . „ 10

THE ABBEY OF CITEAUX . . . . . „ 27
From VIOLLET LE DUC'S "*Dict. de l'Architecture.*"

GATEWAY OF THE ABBEY OF CLUNY . . . . „ 31
From CORROYER'S "*Gothic Architecture.*"

INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH OF VIGNORY . . . „ 36
From CORROYER'S "*Architecture Romane.*"

GROUND PLAN OF THE ABBEY OF CLUNY . . . „ 37
From VIOLLET LE DUC'S "*Dict. de l'Architecture.*"

CHURCH OF S. MARK'S, VENICE (Exterior) . . . „ 39

CHURCH OF S. MARK'S, VENICE (Interior) . . . „ 40

List of Illustrations

Abbey Church of S. Albans . . . . . *page* 51

Peterborough Cathedral . . . . . „ 57
From a photograph by Wilson, *Aberdeen.*

Battle Abbey . . . . . „ 59

Romanesque Ambulatory from the South Transept, Gloucester . . . . *To face page* 64
From F. S. Waller's "*Notes and Sketches.*"

View of Roman Gloucester . . . „ 68
From a water-colour sketch by Mr. Kemp, *Head-master of the School of Art, Gloucester.*

Crypt of S. Eutropius, Saintes . . . . *page* 80
From Viollet le Duc's "*Dict. de l'Architecture.*"

Crypt of S. Seurin . . . . . „ 83
From Viollet le Duc's "*Dict. de l'Architecture.*"

The Crypt of Gloucester. (*In Photogravure.*) *To face page* 87
From a photograph by F. H. Evans.

The Nave of Gloucester . . . . „ 92
From a photograph by F. H. Evans.

Gloucester Cathedral, North Aisle from Ambulatory . . . . . „ 96
From a photograph by F. H. Evans.

A Mediæval Screen . . . . . *page* 105
From Viollet le Duc's "*Dict. de l'Architecture.*"

A Coventry Mystery . . . . . „ 116

Hell Mouth in the Mystery Plays . . . „ 119

Representation of the Prodigal Son . . . „ 121

Reims Cathedral . . . . . „ 124
From Viollet le Duc's "*Dict. de l'Architecture.*"

Paul's Walk . . . . . *To face page* 128
From W. H. Ainsworth's "*Old St. Paul's.*"

List of Illustrations

PLAN OF THE ULPIAN BASILICA, ROME . . . *page* 135

PLAN OF THE BASILICA OF S. PAUL-WITHOUT-THE-WALLS, ROME . . . . . „ 137

TOMB OF EDWARD II. IN GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL . . . . . *To face page* 148
From a photograph by F. H. EVANS.

BASILICA OF S. CLEMENT, ROME . . . . . *page* 157
From CORROYER'S "*Architecture Romane.*"

PLAN OF THE CATHEDRAL OF PARIS . . . . „ 161
From VIOLLET LE DUC'S "*Dict. de l'Architecture.*"

PLAN OF THE CATHEDRAL OF BOURGES . . . „ 161
From VIOLLET LE DUC'S "*Dict. de l'Architecture.*"

CHOIR OF S. DENIS, PARIS . . . . . „ 165
From VIOLLET LE DUC'S "*Dict. de l'Architecture.*"

VEIL OF PERPENDICULAR TRACERY IN THE CHOIR OF GLOUCESTER . . . . . *To face page* 170
From F. S. WALLER'S "*Notes and Sketches.*"

THE CHOIR OF GLOUCESTER . . . . „ 176
From a photograph by F. H. EVANS.

GRISAILLE AND BORDER, BOURGES . . . . *page* 188
From MERSON'S "*Les Vitraux.*"

"SIGNATURE" WINDOW AT CHARTRES . . . . „ 190
From MERSON'S "*Les Vitraux.*"

"SIGNATURE" WINDOW IN S. DENIS . . . . „ 192
From MERSON'S "*Les Vitraux.*"

THE ROSE WINDOW AT REIMS . . . . . „ 195
From MERSON'S "*Les Vitraux.*"

RENAISSANCE WINDOW IN S. GUDULE, BRUSSELLS . „ 199
From MERSON'S "*Les Vitraux.*"

WINDOW IN THE CHAPEL OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD. (*In Photogravure*) . . . *To face page* 202
From a photograph by HILLS & SAUNDERS.

List of Illustrations

THE EAST WINDOW, GLOUCESTER . . *To face page* 206
From a photograph by F. H. EVANS.

GALLERY WITH LOCULI . . . . . *page* 213
From SMITH'S "*Dictionary of Christian Antiquities.*"

TABLE TOMB . . . . . „ 214
From SMITH'S "*Dictionary of Christian Antiquities.*"

ARCOSOLIUM . . . . . „ 215
From SMITH'S "*Dictionary of Christian Antiquities.*"

ALTAR OF S. ALESSANDRO . . . . . „ 224
From SMITH'S "*Dictionary of Christian Antiquities.*"

ALTAR OF S. AMBROGIO, MILAN . . . . . „ 227
From SMITH'S "*Dictionary of Christian Antiquities.*"

ALTAR OF S. DENIS . . . . . „ 236

THE ALTAR AND REREDOS, GLOUCESTER . *To face page* 240
From a photograph by F. H. EVANS.

THE LADY CHAPEL, GLOUCESTER . . . . *page* 254
From a photograph by F. H. EVANS.

THE LADY CHAPEL, SALISBURY . . . . . „ 263

NÔTRE DAME, PARIS . . . . . „ 271

MAIN FAÇADE OF LAON CATHEDRAL . . . . „ 273
From CORROYER'S "*Gothic Architecture.*"

TOWER OF S. PIERRE, CAEN . . . . . „ 275
From CORROYER'S "*Gothic Architecture.*"

TOWER OF THE CATHEDRAL OF FREIBURG-IN-BREISGAU „ 276
From CORROYER'S "*Gothic Architecture.*"

TOWER OF ANTWERP CATHEDRAL . . . . „ 277
From CORROYER'S "*Gothic Architecture.*"

TOWER OF GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL . . . . „ 279
From a drawing by HERBERT RAILTON.

List of Illustrations

THE DEANERY, GLOUCESTER . . . . . *page* 290
From a drawing by HERBERT RAILTON.

THE CLOISTER GARDEN, GLOUCESTER . . . . . „ 295
From a drawing by HERBERT RAILTON.

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL: THE CLOISTERS—SOUTH WALK AND CARRELS . . . *To face page* 300
From a photograph by F. H. EVANS.

THE LITTLE CLOISTERS OF GLOUCESTER . „ 306
From a photograph by F. H. EVANS.

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL: THE CLOISTERS—EAST WALK. (*In Photogravure*) . . „ 312
From a photograph by F. H. EVANS.

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL: THE CLOISTERS—NORTH WALK WITH RECESS FOR LAVATORIUM . . . . . „ 318
From a photograph by F. H. EVANS.

ENTRANCE TO THE CHAPTER-HOUSE, GLOUCESTER . . . . . „ 322
From a photograph by F. H. EVANS.

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL: CARREL IN SOUTH CLOISTER . . . . . „ 336
From a photograph by F. H. EVANS.

*** *The Author wishes to express his sincere obligations and hearty thanks to Mr. John Murray, for permission to reproduce the illustrations on pp.* 213, 214, 215, 224, 227; *to Mr. F. S. Waller for the use of his drawings in "Notes and Sketches"; and to Messrs. Hills & Saunders for similar kindness in regard to their photograph of the "Reynolds" window. Also to Messrs. Seeley & Co. for the cuts from their English translation of Corroyer's "Gothic Architecture," and to Messrs. Simpkin, Marshall, & Co. for the illustration facing p.* 6.

A FEW IMPORTANT DATES TO ILLUSTRATE CHAPTER I

A.D.

313 Edict of Constantine the Great establishing Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire.

455 Sack of Rome by Genseric the Vandal.

476 Western Empire extinguished by Odoacer the Herule.

494 Ostrogothic rule in Italy under Theodoric.

466 Visigothic rule in South Gaul under Euric (later in Spain also).

481 Frankish rule in North Gaul under Clovis.

527–565 Justinian, Emperor of the East, reconquers Italy, &c.

568 Lombard rule in Italy.

622–713 Mohammed and the Arab Conquest of most of the East, Syria, Egypt, Africa, and Spain.

732 Rise of the Frankish power. Arabs defeated near Tours.

768–814 Reign and Conquests of Charlemagne.

814–900 The Raids and Conquests of the Northmen or Danes in Northern and Central Europe.

888 Final break-up of Charlemagne's Empire and Dynasty. The Misery of Europe.

900 Hungarian raids (Turks, Scythians, Tartars) over Germany, Gaul, Italy.

934 & 955 Hungarian raids finally broken up by Henry the Fowler, and Otho the Great.

BRITAIN.

449 First landing of Jutes in Britain.

473–80 First landing of Saxons and Engles.

588 Conquest of Roman-Britain by North-folk completed.

787 First coming of Danes (Vikings).

878 King Alfred's first victory over Danes. Peace of Wedmore.

A Few Important Dates

A FEW DATES ILLUSTRATING CHAPTER II

Rough Periods of Duration of Barbarian Invasions.

714–900 Saracens.
787–950 Northmen (Vikings).
884–955 Hungarians or Magyars.

845 Raynar Lodbrok, the Viking, raids Paris.
911 Establishment of Rollo in Normandy. Treaty of Claire sur Epte.
987 Hugh Capet, and commencement of a stable government of part of France.
1000 Universal expectation of the end of the world.
1035 William (the Conqueror) succeeds to the Duchy of Normandy.

ENGLAND.

978–1016 Ethelred—Edmund Ironside—Danish wars and successes.
1016–1041 Canute and the Danish supremacy in England.
1041–1066 Edward the Confessor. Anglo-Saxon supremacy restored.

A FEW DATES ILLUSTRATING CHAPTER III

A.D. *circa.*
880–90–1047 Period over which stretched the general degradation of the Papacy.
904 Sergius III. In this Pontificate began influence of Marozia and her daughter.
956 John XII. The most infamous of the line of evil Popes.
999 (Gerbert) Silvester II. One of the rare exceptions in the evil line.
1033 Benedict IX. Shares the palm of infamy with John XII.
1048 (Bruno of Toul) Leo IX. began a nobler succession of Popes.

THE

WHITE ROBE OF CHURCHES

CHAPTER I

THROUGH THE AGES

A MONK of the great Benedictine Abbey of Cluny, one Raoul Glaber, in a History of his own Time, finished about A.D. 1047, writing of the year 1003, tells us how everywhere, especially in Italy and in Gaul, men began to restore and to renew churches, how all Christian peoples seemed to contend with each other which should raise the most superb houses of God. "It was as though the world had arisen and tossed aside the worn-out garments of ancient time, and wished to apparel itself in a white robe of churches."

Let us glance for a moment through those earlier centuries of which the monk Raoul Glaber was speaking, —and see what had been happening in those far-back ages—and how it came to pass that in A.D. 1003 the Christian world was determined "to apparel itself in a white robe of churches."

For the first 280 years of its existence, the position of the Christian community, in the midst of avowed and

often of relentless enemies, requiring more or less secrecy and privacy for its public services, rendered the erection of any but the humblest buildings exceptional. The expression we come upon in the New Testament Epistles, "The Church which is in the house" of such an one, points unmistakably to the meeting of the little company of believers in the dwelling of one of its members, and the Room or Rooms set apart for the purpose formed the earliest Christian oratories or chapels. The primitive chapels and oratories of the Catacombs belong to the same class of simple early churches. That there were examples of other and more considerable buildings is evident from the reference of Eusebius to the earlier church at Tyre, destroyed in the Diocletian persecution. But such buildings, erected before the peace of the Church, were evidently exceptional, and probably were not of any very great size or importance.

But all was changed by the promulgation of the celebrated Edict of Milan by the Emperor Constantine, in the year 313, which announced that Christianity henceforth was to be the religion of the Empire. At once in various centres great buildings were erected or adapted for the use of the vast numbers of the Roman world who were prepared openly to profess their acceptance of Christian doctrines.

The Basilica was at once adopted as the most convenient model for the larger churches of the new worship. Among the buildings which surrounded the Forum of any Roman city, the Basilica was the most important. It was a long hall, usually closed at the end opposite the entrance by a semi-circular wall. In this building the citizens transacted public business; a portion of it being used as a Court of Justice. But it served, too,

many of the purposes of the modern "Exchange." Its size and general arrangement designated it as the best model for the Christian Churches of the Empire. Possibly in a few instances the original Basilica was at once

Santa Sophia, Constantinople.

adopted for Christian worship, but in the vast majority of cases, copies of the Basilica, more or less modified, were erected, notably in Rome and then in Constantinople. Several stately churches upon this model were the work of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor.

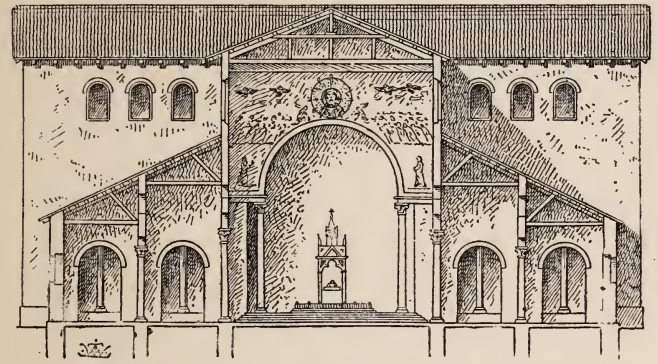
The White Robe of Churches

The Basilican form, however, was not exclusively followed. From the earliest period of the adoption of Christianity by the Empire—we are speaking of the fourth century—a good many circular churches were built. Generally speaking, *the West*, however, remained faithful to the Basilican form for its churches, known as the Latin style. In *the East*, notably after the great building period of the Emperor Justinian (A.D. 532), a square or round pattern with a vault surmounted by a cupola, after the example of S. Sophia, the famous church of the "Holy Wisdom," the masterpiece of Justinian's architects at Constantinople, was largely followed.

A feeling of disappointment naturally arises when we search in vain for traces or records of any considerable number of important ecclesiastical buildings between the early years of the fourth and the early years of the eleventh centuries in the *West*. But it must be remembered what happened during those hapless seven hundred years. Flood following flood of barbarian conquerors pouring over first one land, then another, swept away or wrecked well-nigh every church, and before the hapless country had recovered from the effects of one terrible catastrophe, another devastating invasion overwhelmed the land. Within a hundred years of the Edict of Constantine proclaiming Christianity as the religion of the Roman world in A.D. 313, the danger of Italy, the centre of the Empire, became acute, and the legions stationed in distant countries and remote frontiers were recalled for the defences of Italy and Rome. In the year 455 Genseric the Vandal sacked the imperial city. In A.D. 476, Odoacer the Herule finally swept away the last vestiges of the old imperial rule, and

a few years later Theodoric the Ostrogoth displaced Odoacer. What hope was there of seeing, in such a calamitous period, any number of enduring monuments of architecture ?

In the *East*, for a time, things were more still. The torrents of the Confederacies of the Northern Barbarians had spent their strength before they reached the mighty walls of Constantinople, and the strange pathetic ruins of many churches of considerable size and magnificence



Basilica of S. Paul-without-the-walls, Rome. (Transverse Section.)

in Central Syria tell us that between the earlier years of the fourth and the closing years of the fifth century a period of comparative stillness favoured the development of Christian architecture in parts of the decaying but still powerful empire of the *East*. The sixth century, moreover, witnessed the great reign in the East of the Emperor Justinian, A.D. 533-565, whose generals, Belisarius and Narses, once more, for a brief interlude, made the name of Rome famous and feared in the barbarian-

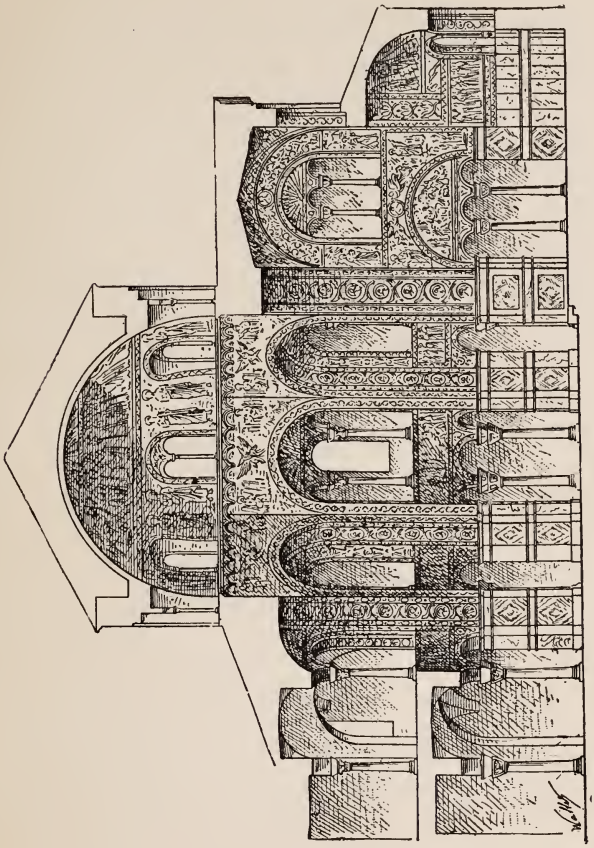
harassed West as in the East. Once more, for a few years, Italy was ruled by a powerful Roman emperor. Justinian was a great church-builder, and some of his lordly churches are with us still. S. Sophia at Constantinople and S. Vitale and S. Apollinaris at Ravenna, to take conspicuous examples, are still among the architectural glories of the world. But the "stillness" was but of short duration, for before the sixth century had run its course the Lombard invader had reconquered the fairest and largest portions of Italy [1]; and the following century (the seventh) witnessed the sudden rise of the Mahommedan power in the East. With extraordinary and undreamed-of rapidity, well-nigh the whole of the Eastern Empire was overrun by Arab (Mahommedan) conquerors, whose first work was the destruction or spoiling of every Christian church. Syria, Egypt, Africa, all passed for ever, as far as men could foresee, out of Christian influences—and the Eastern Empire, reduced to very narrow limits, dragged on for centuries a precarious, and comparatively speaking, an uninfluential existence.

To return to the *West*—we will dwell for a brief space on the fortunes of the great province of Gaul, which stretches from the River Scheldt and the sands and dunes of Frisia on the North Sea, to the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean on the south, from the long seaboard of the Atlantic in the west to the snowy mountains of Switzerland in the east. Gaul, in the days of the first Christian Emperor, Constantine, boasted, it is said, of more than a hundred cities, rivalling those of Italy in wealth and in

[1] During the Lombard supremacy in North and Central Italy there was a time of comparative "stillness," lasting about two hundred centuries (A.D. 568–774). In this period a certain number of churches, &c., were built under Lombard influence.

BASILICA OF SS. NEREUS AND ACHILLES

population. Very early had the threatenings of the resistless barbarian torrent been heard in this mighty province



Church of S. Vitalis, Ravenna. (Longitudinal Section.)

of the West. It had even witnessed a terrible raid of German invaders as early as A.D. 253. But until the close of the fourth century Gaul had, although at intervals suffer-

ing grave damage, made head against the invading hordes. But still during the century which followed the Christian edict of Constantine, the Gallo-Roman dwellers in that great division of the Empire were more busied in building fortifications round their defenceless cities, than in erecting churches in them; and in the latter years of that fourth century we read how these new walls were largely constructed of stones and materials taken from their noblest civic buildings. But their defences were of no avail; for in the year 407 the Teutonic hordes, in vast force, swept over Gaul, and from that date the old Gallo-Roman society may be said to have ceased to exist. The Visigoths now occupied South Gaul and Spain, while the Franks, another group of Teuton tribes, took permanent possession of the northern and central portions of the great Gaulish province, the Goth leaving behind him no monumental traces of his long occupation. Gradually, as the years passed, the Frank drove the Goth further and ever further south, until only Spain and the district on the Mediterranean seaboard, known as Septimiania, remained to the Visigothic conqueror.

The Frankish tribes, as time went on, displayed peculiar powers of organisation and of self-government. They adopted, as in fact with greater or less zeal did all these wandering Teuton peoples, with especial earnestness the religion of the conquered Roman Provincials. In the year 732 the Frankish conquerors earned the gratitude of the Christian world by a signal victory, which one of their distinguished chieftains, Charles Martel, gained over a great army of Arab (Mahommedan) conquerors, between Tours and Poitiers. These Arabs, after crushing the Visigoths of Spain, had penetrated far into Central Gaul. Thus for ever were the victorious Mahommedan hordes,

who had already conquered and desolated the fairest provinces of the Eastern Empire and Spain, thrust back from the West.

A grandson of this Charles Martel consolidated the already vast Frankish dominion, and succeeded in establishing a great Frankish empire, which included well-nigh the entire West, Gaul, Germany, and Italy. For a brief space while this Frankish hero lived, it seemed as though a general "stillness" would once more allow the arts and pursuits of peace to flourish. This hero is known in history as Charlemagne, and under his strong wise rule, after a long interval, again we hear of certain great churches rapidly arising in various centres of the West. But when he passed away in the year 814, his sceptre fell into weaker hands. The vast Frankish empire of Charlemagne was divided, and again subdivided. A new family of barbarians from the extreme north of Europe suddenly made their appearance, and under the dreaded names of Danes, Northmen, or Vikings, desolated vast districts of Northern and Central Europe, which, under the new Teutonic races, were slowly recovering the long series of the earlier invasions and raids of the Lombards, the Saxons, the Goths, and the Franks, and before the end of the ninth century the misery and desolation of the West and East had reached its extreme point. It was, perhaps, the darkest moment in the history of the world.

In this "bird's-eye view" of a history of the West after the edict of Constantine of A.D. 313, we have omitted to speak of the fortunes of our island. They closely resemble those of the rest of Europe, differing only in the degree of ruin which followed in the wake of the barbarian invasions of the fifth and sixth centuries. In Britain the disaster was, perhaps, more complete. The Saxons had thoroughly

exterminated the Roman British Provincial before the close of the sixth century, and when in the ninth century the Northmen or Danes spread desolation over Europe, slowly recovering from the earlier Teutonic invasions, no country suffered so severely and was so cruelly harassed by the Northmen as was Anglo-Saxon Britain.

Interior of Santa Sophia, Constantinople.

CHAPTER II

THE MISERY OF THE TENTH CENTURY

In order to grasp the full meaning of the marvellous Renaissance of the Church in the eleventh century, we must for a brief space dwell on the extreme woe and sadness of the one hundred and fifty to one hundred and eighty years which immediately preceded that great awakening.

A story is told of the great Emperor Charlemagne, how once from his palace near Narbonne he saw the black sails of some Viking pirate ships hovering close to the coast. The courtiers, to their surprise, saw him weeping. "Would you know why, my fideles?" asked the mighty conqueror. "*I* have no fear of these sea-pirates, but I am sorely distressed because I foresee the woe which these strong sea-robbers will one day work to those who come after me."[1] This curious traditional prophecy of Charlemagne was terribly fulfilled. Among the barbarians who desolated Europe when the strong hand of the great emperor no longer held the sceptre of the West, the Vikings or sea-robbers of the northern seas were long the deadliest foes of Christianity and of civilisation. After the death of Charlemagne, A.D. 814, his vast empire gradually crumbled to pieces. No prince of his dynasty arose powerful enough to unite, for any lengthened period, even a portion of the divided monarchy sufficient to make head against the terrible invaders

[1] *Monach. S. Gall*, l. ii. c. 22.

who from all sides ravaged the European countries. The one hundred and eighty or two hundred years which followed the death of Charlemagne is the gloomiest period in the history of Christianity. In the western countries especially, the northern sea-pirates, sailing up the great river highways of the Rhine, the Seine, and the Loire, harassed and desolated the land. Contemporary chroniclers tell us in Gaul alone of some fifty separate invasions of these terrible sea-pirates. They pillaged, burnt, and destroyed monastery, village, and city, sparing none. Long and dreary is the catalogue of fair cities then destroyed. Trèves was burnt, Cologne was burnt, Coblentz, Cambrai, Aix-la-Chapelle, Rouen, Amiens, Orléans, Chartres, Tours, Toulouse, Paris, amongst many others, were ravaged and partially wrecked. Well-nigh all the great Roman cities of the north and west of Europe were more or less destroyed or sacked; schools of learning, monuments of art, churches, monastic communities, without number, perished in these awful raids. Gaul, especially, suffered at the hands of these redoubtable sea-robbers. So great was the desolation produced by their repeated raids that at one period we read of vast packs of wolves roaming unchecked through the once fertile Aquitaine, while in the historian Michelet's words, "Wild animals seemed to have taken possession of desolated France."

In the southern districts of Europe, in Sicily, Italy, Spain, and the south of France, the fierce Mahommedan Saracens were almost as much dreaded as were the Viking pirates in the north. As early as the middle of the ninth century, the Saracen fleets were masters of the Mediterranean; Spain, Sicily, and a large portion of Italy were in their hands, and even sacred Rome beheld the Moslem at her gates burning and plundering the once wealthy

and prosperous territories in the neighbourhood of the imperial city.

On the eastern frontiers a yet more savage and redoubtable foe appeared. From the south-east of Europe burst without any previous note of warning upon appalled Christendom a horde of savage warriors, who have been described as wild beasts let loose upon mankind. These were the Magyars or Hungarians, who from A.D. 884 to 936 (perhaps the yet later date of A.D. 954 would be more accurate) were the common terror of Christendom. They swept in desolating incursions over the whole of Germany and Switzerland. Italy, too, was exposed to their fearful ravages, which were extended to large portions even of the south of France. What the Viking spared or overlooked, the more terrible Hungarian gathered in his awful gleaning. And be it remembered Europe was exposed to these frightful raids, more or less, for a long period. While, as we have said, the anarchy and fierce internal dissensions, which after the death of Charlemagne, existed in all the countries of Europe, prevented anything like a systematised resistance to these wild waves of foreign savage invasion. Gradually, however, as the tenth century advanced, a more powerful and better organisation was formed in several states which made up Western Christendom. In Germany, Otho the Great, A.D. 951, welded together a confederation more powerful than had existed since the death of Charlemagne. In Gaul, the Viking settlement in Normandy and the adjacent provinces had become an orderly and disciplined state. While in the centre of Gaul (Royal France), A.D. 987, Hugh Capet had laid the foundation of a stable kingdom, and his son, Robert the Pious, who succeeded him, "seems," in Michelet's words, "to have disarmed the

divine anger in his simplicity of mind, having the peace of God incarnate in him." The perpetual *Viking* raids, after the first establishment of the Norman Duchy, grew rarer and less destructive. The dreaded *Hungarian* power was shattered first in A.D. 926 by the victory of the German hero Henry the Fowler, and was completely broken by the prowess of Otho the Great, in a great battle fought in A.D. 954.

But it was indeed a desolated and impoverished empire, which, exhausted by long years of anarchy, internal wars, and foreign invasions, slowly regained strength as the melancholy tenth century drew to a close.

CHAPTER III

CONDITION AND INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH DURING THE PERIOD FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF CHARLEMAGNE

What now of the Church during this age of confusion, bitter disaster, and awful depression, did it in any respect as a guide, a comforter, an example among the sorely-tried and harassed peoples of Western Christendom, fulfil its high and saintly mission? Alas! the faithful historian has no fair picture of the Church's conduct in that darkest of all ages to paint. That the clergy suffered with the people is indubitable, that a vast number of their fairest churches were burnt and destroyed, that their monasteries were largely pillaged and even completely wrecked, that their property of all kinds was enormously diminished in value, is certain; probably their losses were greater by far than the losses of any other class in the community, for the bitter hostility of the Vikings especially to Christianity is notorious, and something more than a mere love of plunder influenced their behaviour to the helpless monasteries, and moved them to single out the churches and ecclesiastical buildings as the peculiar object of their passion for wrecking and destroying.

But the chronicler of Church history during that melancholy age is obliged to record that at no period in Christian story was the life of the vowed ministers of the religion of the Crucified so scarred and defaced

by human passions, so devoid of any lofty ideal or noble purpose, as it was in that age of anarchy, disaster, and universal depression.

And yet its opportunities all through this period of gloom were immense; its power through all the troubles and sorrows occasioned by internal dissensions and terrific barbarian invasions was ever great. "Its immortal order rested on no precarious or hereditary descent. The cathedral or the monastery might be burned, the clergy and the monks massacred. A new generation arose immediately among the ruins, resumed their wasted estates, and repaired their shattered buildings. . . . Still it renewed its strength, recovered its dilapidated resources, found some latent power which brought it back to its commanding superiority, revenged itself for its humiliation, and still grew on under every, it might seem, fatal change in the political atmosphere." What a splendid power for good might not churchmen have been in such a melancholy time!

"But instead of Christianising the world, themselves had become secularised."[1] Their leading men played the part of insolent nobles and selfish leaders rather than peaceful prelates and quiet teachers of their Master's Gospel, and the rank and file of churchmen as a rule only too faithfully copied the evil example set by their bishops, abbots, and leading men. Of course there were bright exceptions in this sad catalogue of men who so grievously fell short of the duties of their high calling—noble exceptions—but the above dreary summary is a fair picture of the large majority of churchmen. Even monasticism, where at least better things might have been hoped for, was at its lowest ebb in the tenth century of our era.

[1] Milman, "Latin Christianity," Book V. chap. iv.

The Church—Tenth Century

The Church during this gloomy century and a half emphatically lost much of its moral influence. It became like the society around it—materialistic, violent, even careless and reckless of human life. Many of the priests openly robbed and plundered their flocks. They suffered their churches in many instances to be desecrated, their morals were often lax, their lives were dissolute, they consented to their highest dignities being bought and sold. They were in not a few instances married, and handed down their sees and abbeys to their children, looking upon ecclesiastical benefices and preferments as private property. The future of the Church of Christ in that fatal age seemed melancholy in the extreme, almost hopeless.

The degradation of the Church during this gloomy age was largely increased by the shameful example set by Rome and her Popes. The indefinite but wide claims of Rome to a universal supremacy, if not authority in the Church, had been lately enormously increased by the policy of Pope Nicholas I., who died A.D. 867. This Nicholas, if he did not promulgate, at least caused the recognition of the False Decretals as the Law of the Church.

These "Decretals," now universally confessed to have been a "pious fraud," asserted the supremacy, the unapproached dignity and privileges of the Bishop of Rome, and supported the tremendous assumption upon the evidence of a collection of letters and decrees of some twenty of the oldest Roman bishops, from S. Clement, who followed S. Peter, to Melchiades, bishop A.D. 311–314.

In the last quarter of the ninth century the chair of S. Peter, whose occupants made this vast claim—a claim scarcely disputed, be it remembered, by a very large portion of Western Christendom—was filled by a long

succession of pontiffs who, with rare exception, owed their election to some crime perpetrated by themselves or their adherents, by men who, after a brief occupancy of the great See, disappeared from the scene as suddenly and miserably as they had appeared upon it. The memory of some of this evil line of popes who, with rare exception, continued through the whole of the tenth century, and even into the eleventh, is disgraced by a record of crimes so foul that the historian shrinks from even naming them. The learned Benedictine Mabillon, whose writings are esteemed authoritative even by all serious Roman Catholic scholars, confessed that most of the popes of the tenth century lived rather like monsters, or like wild beasts, than like bishops. A few details will illustrate the strange and woeful state of degradation into which the Mother Church of Western Christianity, with her awful claims to supreme power, had sunk, and in which she remained during that long sad period of which we are speaking. Before Sergius IV., A.D. 1009 (of unenviable notoriety) became Bishop of Rome, seven, some historians reckon nine, popes had succeeded to the great office in thirteen years.

It was when Sergius III. was occupying the chair of S. Peter, A.D. 904–911, that we first hear of the infamous Theodora and her daughters, who for many years at their pleasure disposed of the papal tiara, procuring in succession the election of their evil friends and their own sons. In A.D. 956, Pope John XII., with a cynical contempt for even the degraded public opinion of the time, made his bishop's palace a school of prostitution. He was murdered under circumstances of nameless shame. Other prelates followed—men who won the great office only to dishonour it by crime, and who vacated it by violent

death. "To seek counsel from such a monster," said a Bishop of Orléans to the Council of Rheims, A.D. 991 (he was alluding to John XII.), "even if he be set on a lofty throne blazing with purple and gold, is to address a block of marble." Rarely in the dreary catalogue of the men who claimed the obedience and reverence of the Western Church do we come upon a reverend or dignified figure. Gerbert, known as Sylvester II., A.D. 999, one of those rare personages who was celebrated in all lands for his great learning and abilities, was credited in that dark age for having dealings with the Evil One, from whom he had learned the secret of his power and acquirements. It was this Gerbert who said, "Romanorum mores mundus perhorrescit." The famous scholar, Cardinal Baronius, A.D. 1588–1607, alluding to the foul line of Bishops of Rome, curiously bases upon it an argument for the Divine authority of the papal church, which he urges continued and kept extending in spite of such monstrous iniquities which for generations were enthroned at the head of it, staining it, he allows, with defilements which cannot be effaced.

One grievous result from the shameful example of Rome was the universal practice of simony which disgraced the Church, and effectually poisoned its life. It became the general impression that at Rome everything was venal, that every office from the highest was purchasable. The example was fatally followed in other countries. The bishop too often bought his see, and proceeded to indemnify himself by selling the inferior prebends or cures. Wide-spread indeed was the evil. Great lords and princes bestowed not unfrequently great bishoprics on their sons, even if these were infants. We read, for instance, of a child only five years old made Archbishop of Rheims, of a Bishop of Narbonne only ten. Churches

were bequeathed to daughters as their dowry. How terrible was this crime of simony in high places is sadly apparent from the Acts of the Councils of Rheims and Mentz—A.D. 1049–1050—under the presidency and influence of the austere and saintly Bruno of Toul, who as Pope Leo IX. inaugurated a new and nobler line of Bishops of Rome. In this memorable Council the Archbishops of Rheims and Sens, the Bishops of Nevers, Constance, Nantes, Langres, Beauvais, and Amiens and others, were brought to confess that they had either bought these high dignities themselves, or had obtained them through purchase by their parents or relatives.

The long-drawn-out tragedy of the tenth century closed with a fearful looking for the end of the world, which men very generally believed would come about the year 1000. Strange and terrible portents seemed to herald and accompany the fatal date. One of the most striking was a famine which prevailed with greater or less severity in many parts of Europe for some five years. Sickness and grievous epidemics were naturally the accompaniment of such a famine. The monk, Raoul Glaber, enumerates a long sequence of these melancholy catastrophes. But the early years of the next century saw the dawn of a better state of things, and a general awakening to a nobler life was at hand. And slowly as the eleventh century advanced, the Church awoke to a sense of its responsibility; and the records of the eleventh century have indeed a different colouring to that of the gloomy events of the century and a half which preceded it. The awakening, which soon became general, is one of the remarkable facts in the story of Christendom.

CHAPTER IV

THE SOURCE OF THE REVIVAL OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

Raoul Glaber,[1] the Benedictine, with whose graphic words we opened our story, finished the history of his own time in the year 1047. He was therefore an eye-witness of many of the later scenes which he so graphically describes. He lived in the awful days which close what has been termed the iron age of history, and watched the dawn of the great revival of the eleventh century. After the fateful year 1000 had come and gone, and the world still went on as it had done aforetime, the monk Glaber tells us how there passed over men a new fervid spirit which inspired them everywhere to repair, adorn, and even to build, churches. It was as though the old religious fervour, so long dormant in the Western Church, had suddenly awoke to life and activity. But the feeling of gloomy apprehension that the close of the present dispensation was at hand, which had been long weighing upon men's hearts, was in many cases not entirely dispelled when the year 1000 had passed, and the world remained unharmed. Some now feared the terrors of the millennium still lay before them, and would come when the Lord appeared in judgment in 1033, reckoning the 1000 years from the date of the Master's ascension. But that

[1] Glaber dedicated his book to the world-famous Abbot of Cluny, Odilo. He is supposed to have died in Odilo's great religious house.

year, too, came and went, and nothing happened. After A.D. 1033, wrote Glaber, "the rains ceased, the clouds vanished, the bright heavens were seen again, abundant harvests once more gladdened men's hearts, prices were reduced, the poor were relieved, and the gloom and terror disappeared."

An extraordinary reaction in Church life indeed set in, a reaction which gathered life and strength as the century advanced. Various causes contributed to this remarkable and striking renaissance of religion. Political reasons had, of course, much to do with it. We have already touched upon some of the more obvious of these. The cessation of the Hungarian invasions, the gradual settlement of the Northmen in England and Normandy, which put an end to the long-drawn-out Viking raids which for so many years had harassed Northern, Western, and even Central Europe, the increasing power of the empire in the centre of Europe, and the rise of a more stable and influential dynasty in France, all this made for the comparative "stillness" of Western Christendom.

In the Church—which in the darkest hours of the gloom and terror of the ninth and tenth centuries had been the shame rather than the support of the Western world—a new spirit had arisen, a spirit which by no means suddenly took the world by storm, but which, stirred up by slow and painful striving, spread over many years of patient prayer and work, aroused the slumbering Church to a sense of its responsibility, to a knowledge of its missed and wasted opportunities.

Very largely this noble and far-reaching work, which succeeded in arousing the entire Western Church, was done by a religious house in the Burgundy district of the east of France, near Macon, south of the ancient

town of Dijon, among a small group of Benedictine monks.

The monasteries of the West were, with very rare exceptions, occupied by monks belonging to the order of S. Benedict. It has already been noticed that the discipline and life of monastics had seriously deteriorated before the beginning of the tenth century, this deterioration being largely due to the same causes of misery and invasion which affected all classes and orders in the Western world.

In the year 909, William, surnamed the Pious, Duke of Aquitaine, founded a new religious house at Cluny, near Macon, and placed it under the old Benedictine rule, but the new community was to be guarded with new and austere regulations. It was the rare fortune of this newly-founded monastery that for more than a century and a half it was ruled by a succession of extraordinary men — Odo, Mayeul, Odilo, and Hugh were equally distinguished by their piety, their learning, and their marvellous talent for organisation. The story of the rise of Cluny from the position of a small unknown religious house to its place as the head and centre of the culture and religious zeal of the West, reads like a romance.

It was under the rule of Odo, the second abbot, A.D. 927–942, that Cluny became really a power in the religious world. In his time a number of other monasteries became associated in the reform of Cluny, taking the famous Burgundian House not only as their model but recognising it as their chief, from whose abbot they took their directions. To Mayeul, A.D. 965–994, who followed Aymard, the third abbot, the legends of the Order of Cluny relate how an angel communicated the details of the famous rule of Cluny. Under Mayeul the power and

influence of the house of Cluny continued rapidly to increase. Odilo, who became abbot in A.D. 994, and who ruled for the long period of fifty-four years, was head of a vast communion. The network of monasteries which looked to Cluny as their mother house, and faithfully kept her traditions, spread over a large part of Central and Northern Europe. In the contemporary chronicles, so great was his well-deserved fame, that Abbot Odilo is sometimes designated as the "Archangel of Monks."

The long reign of Abbot Odilo, lasting over half a century, came to an end in A.D. 1049, when a still more illustrious abbot was elected to direct the now world-famed Cluny. This was Hugh, who for sixty years played one of the most distinguished parts in the theatre of European politics and religion. This Hugh was the adviser and friend not only of the chief ecclesiastics of all the western lands, but was more or less intimately connected with most of the princes and statesmen in Europe of his day.

After the death of Abbot Hugh in A.D. 1109, the mighty Burgundian abbey continued to flourish, and the Clunician congregation rapidly multiplied in the various countries of Western Christendom. But the stupendous work, of which we are about to give some brief details, and which had the preponderating influence in bringing about the great Church awakening and revival of the eleventh century, was virtually done before Hugh passed away. Under Abbot Hugh it is computed that as many as 314 religious houses, very many of them of great size and magnificence, belonged to the "obedience" of Cluny.

Before the close of the twelfth century (Abbot Hugh died in A.D. 1109), the number of religious communities belonging to the Clunician rule amounted to the enormous number of some 2000!

CHAPTER V

SOME DETAILS OF THE REVIVAL OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

Cluny and its daughter-houses were by no means only vast communities devoted to prayer and meditation—lonely islands of prayer in the midst of restless, war-loving peoples. They were, it is true, made up of companies of men who prayed much, who led stern, austere lives, essaying to set an example of rigorous self-denial and self-surrender to a generation which had well-nigh forgotten all the acknowledged obligations of Christianity. But Cluny and its congregations sedulously devoted themselves specially to education. In their cloister-schools were trained well-nigh all the men who stood by the thrones of the various European princes of the eleventh century. Most of the thought-leaders of that time were educated at Cluny, or occasionally in one of its great daughter-houses. The monks of Cluny were, besides, indefatigable agriculturists; and owing to their care and skill vast tracts of land, which, during the troubles of the ninth and tenth centuries had become waste and desolate, fens and forests, became once more valuable and useful as pastures, gardens, and corn lands. The revival of agriculture in many parts of Europe was the direct work of these devoted Clunicians.

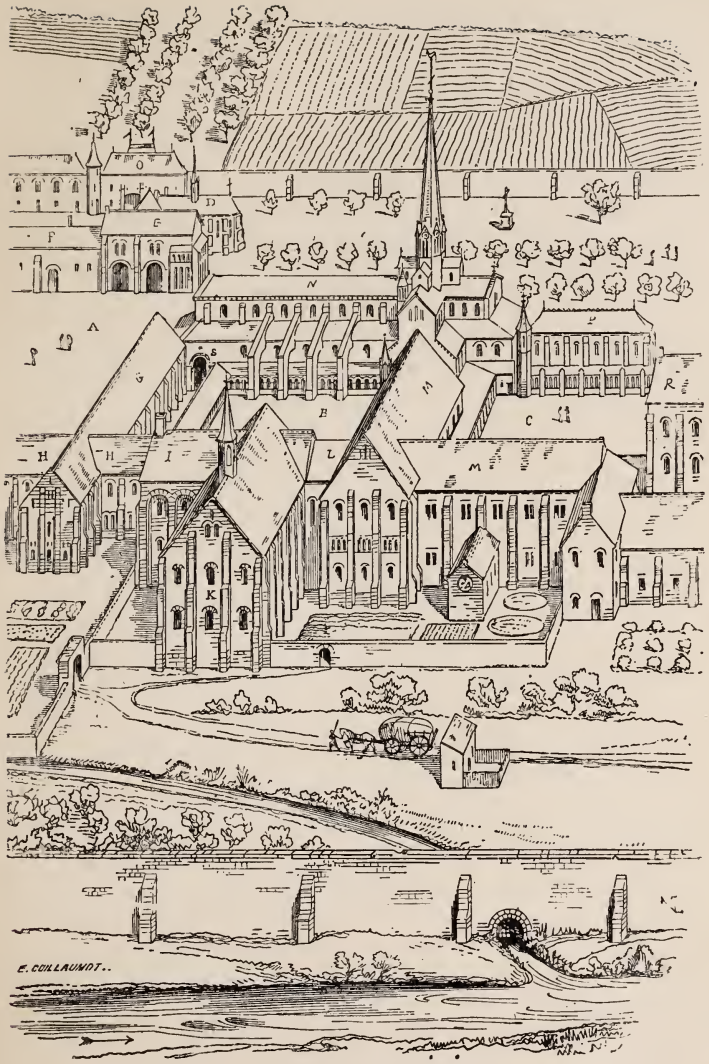
Several of our modern historians[1] do ample justice to

[1] For instance: *Milman* ("Latin Christianity"), *Montalembert* ("Monks of the West"), *Viollet-le-Duc* ("Dictionaire de l'Architecture"), *Corroyer* ("Architecture Gothique"), &c.

Cluny, and dwell with much insistence upon the boundless and extraordinary influence of this great monastic establishment upon the life of the Western world and the Church in the end of the tenth and all through the eleventh centuries—an influence which was not exhausted even in the twelfth century. It was in Cluny that we must seek and find the nursery which furnished the monastic schools of Europe with teachers in every branch of learning and art. It was Cluny which, in the highest conceivable degree, displayed the marvellous reconstructing, reanimating energy of monasticism. Comparatively unknown and undistinguished, it worked slowly through most of the gloomy tenth century; but in the succeeding age the fruit of its quiet, patient work was apparent; and largely through its inspiring example the Church generally awoke from its long and death-like lethargy. It was Cluny, too, that inspired, and, indeed, supplied, some of the new line of Popes who restored the long degraded Papacy to its ancient position of moral supremacy.

Hildebrand, somewhile prior of the great Burgundian House, counsellor and friend of the earlier Popes of the new and nobler line, under the well-known name of Gregory VII., raised the Papacy to a position of splendour and power undreamed of by even his most illustrious and far-seeing predecessors in the Papal chair.

In very widely extended, and in very different centres and in divers manners, was the new zeal for godliness, the new religious earnestness manifested—the zeal and devotion which, as far as we can trace the story, seem to have begun in Cluny, and through Cluny slowly to have been spread abroad. It even touched and moulded the lives of great princes who possessed almost boundless means of influencing thousands of their subjects for weal



Citeaux Abbey.

or woe. So in *England* we note the sudden, almost marvellous, conversion of that descendant of a long line of Pagan Vikings bitterly hostile to Christianity, Canute, A.D. 1014–1036, in whose wise reign again and again we see the hand of an earnest, God-fearing king. After a brief interval of some four years Edward the Confessor (A.D. 1042–1066) followed on the English throne. The Saint-king, with all his shortcomings, left an impress on his country as deep, perhaps deeper, than that left by any other of the long line of princes who preceded or succeeded him in our England.

In *Normandy*, that great province whose influence was extended far beyond the confines of the provinces ruled by the descendants of Rollo, Duke Richard le Bon, A.D. 996–1026, according to his lights, was an intensely religious man. Chroniclers half-ironically have attached to him the appellation of "the monks' friend." His son, the eccentric though able Robert the Magnificent, died "a palmer" in the course of an ill-judged pilgrimage to the Holy Land; but ill-judged though it was, the same religious spirit was at work and prompted the fatal journey. His mighty son, the "Conqueror," be it remembered, whose life-work for good and for evil we do not venture here to discuss, chose as the minister of his reign, as the loved and chosen counsellor of his life's great work, the holy Lanfranc, the wise, far-seeing prelate.

In *Royal France, i.e.* that part of France south of the great Norman duchy, and including much of the central districts, Hugues Capet, A.D. 987–996, gave the new royal dynasty, of which he was the founder, a religious character. He is well named "The King of Priests." His son and successor, Robert the Pious, A.D. 996–1030, was emphatically a saint, though strangely enough Rome has never

canonised him. His life story is coloured with quaint and curious acts of kindness and devotion. In some respects he resembled the English Confessor king.

The dates connected with these princes, so strongly influenced by the religious spirit of the age, are most significant:

France (Royal), . .	A.D. 987–1030
Normandy, . . .	A.D. 996–1035
England, . . .	A.D. 1014–1066

closely corresponding as they do with the dawn and progress of the great revival of religion in the eleventh century.

The spirit awakened by Cluny touched Rome and the Papacy last of all. The new life *there* only really began in A.D. 1048. For in Rome, the heart of Western Christendom, the sleep of Christianity for a long period too closely had resembled death. But at last Rome arose, and then in good earnest her bishops addressed themselves with splendid vigour to the stern task of a complete reformation, not only in their own city but throughout the Western Church, wherever simony or other grave scandals existed. Here Cluny was especially conspicuous, not merely as an inspirer of the Papacy, but even supplying from her community several of the Popes of the new vigorous line. Of the eleventh century Pontiffs, the most eminent are, Gregory VII. (Hildebrand), Urban II. (the Patron of the First Crusade), and Paschal II.

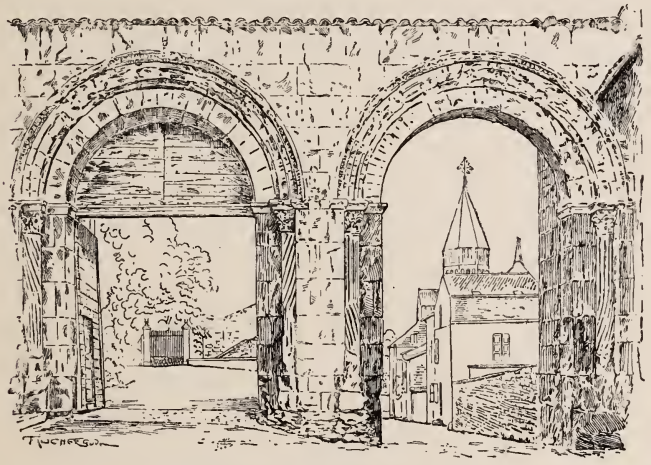
The same century of the great revival (the eleventh) and the first years of the following (the twelfth) witnessed

the foundation of those various orders which formed so conspicuous a feature in the religious life of the Middle Ages. Monasticism, which in past ages had played so great and beneficent a part in Christendom, had withered away, and with rare exceptions, in the ninth and during most of the tenth centuries, monasteries had become homes of sloth and even of vice. The example of Cluny had not only reanimated and reinvigorated the great Benedictine Order, but had inaugurated a new era of discipline and even of saintliness according to the monastic idea of holiness. Men in different countries were scarcely satisfied even with the Cluniac reform; they thirsted after a still greater degree of austerity and self-denial. In Italy this fervour produced the stern and rigorous Order of Camaldoli, founded A.D. 1018, and of Vallombrosa A.D. 1039. In France we read of the establishment of Grammont (the Grandimontani) in A.D. 1074, and of the yet more famous Carthusians, A.D. 1084, and of the company of Fontevraud in A.D. 1100. In A.D. 1098 the Cistercian Community, an offshoot of the Benedictine Order, first appeared, and with extraordinary rapidity, as the twelfth century advanced, the popularity of this new great order equalled and even surpassed even that of the Cluniacs. But the fervour for monasticism was not yet exhausted. The rigid Præmonstratensians appeared in the neighbourhood of Laon in the north-east of France in A.D. 1119, while early in this century (the twelfth) the great military orders of the Hospitallers and the Templars arose in A.D. 1113, and A.D. 1118 respectively.

Differing in some points from the monastic orders enumerated above, the Augustinan Canons, who subsequently became widely spread and very numerous, were

first established comparatively early in that same age at Avignon in A.D. 1038.

This bare catalogue of religious orders, which soon covered France and England, Italy and Germany with new monasteries inhabited by many thousands of "religious," will give some faint idea of the effect of the startling and tremendous religious revival in one phase of



Gateway of the Abbey of Cluny.

religious life of that strange age. The world had never witnessed anything similar before—will it ever again? And, as far as human agency can be traced, the mighty change was in great measure owing to the example and influence of the Burgundian House of Cluny.

The success which attended the reform work of Cluny, and the far-reaching effects of its example, were no doubt

owing in no small measure to the rare wisdom, piety, and learning of those great churchmen we have alluded to above, who filled the office of abbot of the famous house during the latter part of the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Their great influence with the sovereigns and princes of their own time we have already briefly noticed. One striking and original piece of policy devised by Abbot Odilo (A.D. 999–1049) deserves special mention. The "Truce of God" was Odilo's handiwork, and was very generally adopted, and in some countries, notably in the southern part of France, fairly observed, but its influence was felt, even though the fierce passions of that age of soldiers often broke through its blessed restraints. The "Truce of God" forbade all fighting from the Wednesday evening of each week until the Monday morning, as well as during the holy seasons of Lent and Advent. The "Truce" contained other provisions which attempted to soften the conditions of life in that rough fighting age. The contemporaries of the four abbots were well aware of the commanding personality of the chiefs of the great Clunician Order. These abbots might have occupied any position in the hierarchy of the Church, from the chair of S. Peter downwards. But they preferred, as might have been expected, the unique post they occupied at Cluny. Extraordinary privileges were attached by the grateful Bishop of Rome to the "mother house," which had done so much for the fallen see in her hour of sore need, and in A.D. 1120 the dignity of the cardinalate was conferred on the holders of the abbot's office in Cluny, while the four great abbots, above dwelt upon, were eventually canonised, and rank as saints in the long list of famous churchmen. Nor was pious legend wanting, for we read, in language which reminds us of

monkish lore of the far-back days of Bede, in the eighth century, how Abbot Fulgence of Afflighem saw in a dream two beds of gold borne to heaven by angels, and how it was revealed to him that the one belonged to S. Anselm of Canterbury and the other to S. Hugh of Cluny. Anselm and Hugh had been close friends. They died within a few days of each other in the Eastertide of A.D. 1109; while Godefroy, Bishop of Amiens, relates another vision of a procession of saints, who from their heavenly home had gone forth to meet and welcome their new companion, Hugh of Cluny.

CHAPTER VI

THE WHITE ROBE OF CHURCHES

Among the first works of the awakened Western Church seems to have been that zeal and fervour for the repair of the ancient religious fabrics, and more especially for the building of a multitude of new houses of prayer, which Raoul Glaber describes so picturesquely as "the new white robe of churches," so conspicuous in the early years of the eleventh century of our era, in which age the desolating invasions of the barbarians had well-nigh ceased, and a more stable and responsible government was being gradually but surely established throughout European countries. The awful dread of the approaching end of the world was gradually rolled away, and a great renovation of the monasteries and monastic life was in rapid progress, together with a general awakening of the Church after its long sleep.

But though this building work in the early years of the eleventh century was so general, though the number of the new churches, including the humble village churches and the more stately abbeys and cathedrals, was very large —so large that eye-witnesses spoke of the work then done as belonging to the supernatural—very little of it seems to have endured. Whole countries may be searched in vain, and no vestige of the many buildings found! And while in some lands fragments, built into later work, are discoverable by the lynx-eyed antiquarian, very few, indeed, are the churches now with us which can be

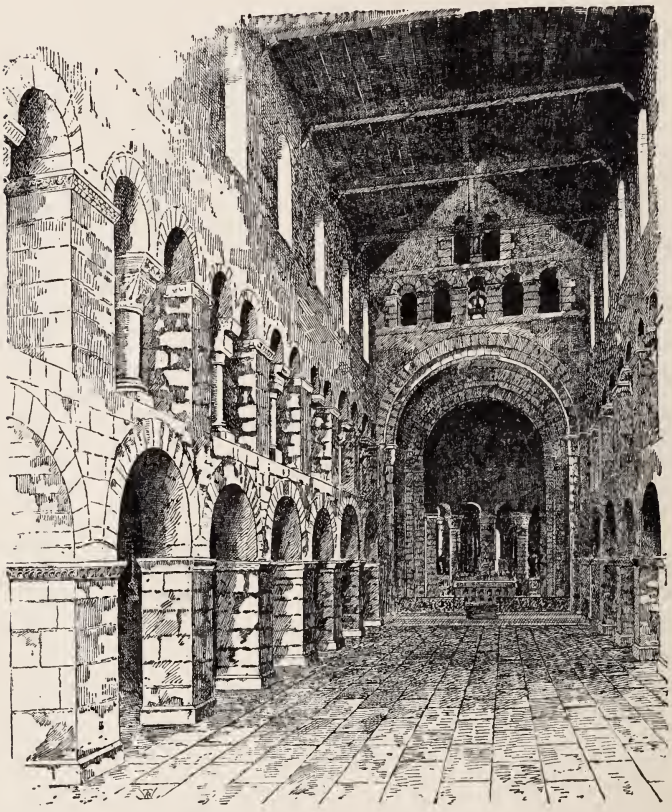
ascribed to the building zeal of the first half of the eleventh century.

The truth is, that when, after the long sad period whose dreary story we have faintly sketched, men began to build again, after ancient patterns, the art of building in many respects was a lost art, and the new churches soon crumbled away and had to be entirely rebuilt. And then, in very many cases, they were re-erected on a yet larger and grander scale than had been attempted in the earlier years of the eleventh century. The vast churches, the lordly abbeys, which were the work of the last quarter of the eleventh and the first half of the twelfth centuries, supplied a want which had begun to be felt. The great "awakening," which we have been painting, was no passing emotion. It was very real. The monasteries grew greater and more thronged. Thousands, whose fathers during the woe and confusion of the preceding ages of sorrow cared nothing for and thought little of service or prayer, now began to assemble in God's houses.

This is the answer to the question often put, but rarely answered, why at this epoch were so many and such vast abbeys and churches erected in the different countries of Europe. And not only were many a church and abbey re-erected as the eleventh century wore away on a grander and vaster scale, but *now* the work was good, and the buildings endured. Men had gradually learned through disaster[1] the secrets of a well-nigh lost and forgotten art.

[1] This is no fancied picture. The curious faultiness and subsequent crumbling away of the many sacred buildings which were the outcome of the first splendid fervour of the "awakening" is tersely but admirably described by Quicherat, *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire* (Moyen age), p. 434, Paris 1886, who cites many interesting examples of these churches erected in the first fervour of the earlier years of the eleventh century but which soon perished.

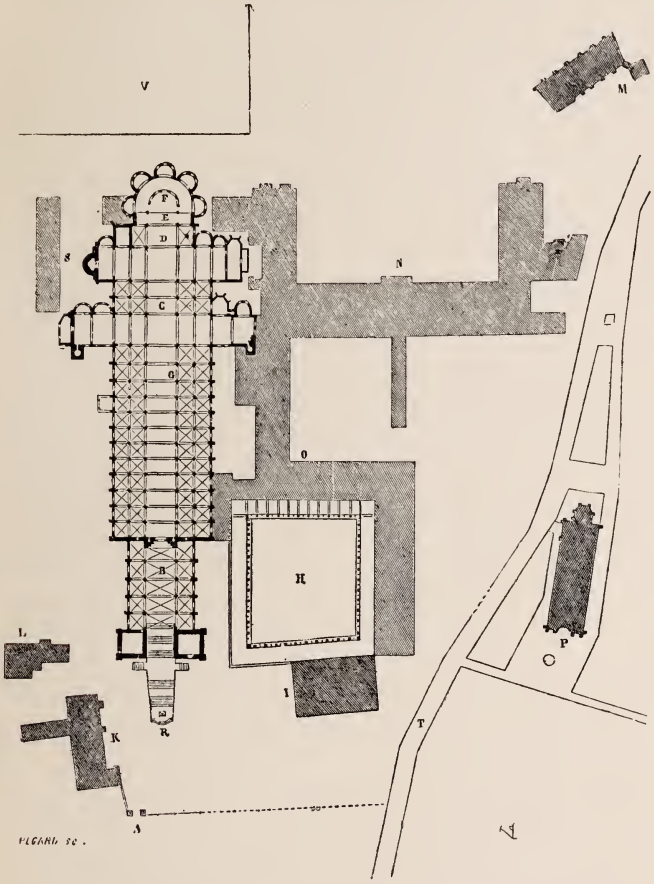
Whereas the churches of the *early* years of the eleventh century, erected in the first fervour of the renaissance of



Interior of the Church of Vignory, Haute Marne, France.

religion, have well-nigh as a whole completely perished and disappeared; the churches of the *later* years of that

century and first half of the following (the twelfth), have



Ground Plan of the Abbey of Cluny.

in many instances, endured the stress and storm of 800

years, *and are with us still*, the marvel and delight of our own days, matchless in their solemn beauty. Few can gaze upon one of those glorious abbey-churches, the work of that far-back strangely-inspired age, without awe, or enter it without devotion.

The abbey church of the great Burgundian monastery of Cluny was an admirable example of the great building work of which we have been speaking. All through the tenth century, as we have seen, was Cluny at work (the first abbey was founded about A.D. 909); the holy influence abroad gradually spreading far and wide, while at home the mother house was becoming larger and larger. While Odilo was abbot, somewhere between A.D. 994 and A.D. 1049, the first important church was built. "I found," said Odilo, "an abbey of wood; I leave behind me an abbey of marble." Especially we read of the stately cloister of Odilo's building.

The century wore on. In the year 1089 Odilo's successor, the yet more famous Abbot Hugh, finding the church of Odilo too small for the vastly increased numbers of the renowned community, determined to rebuild the abbey of Cluny on a grander and vaster scale. We may also fairly assume that in common with the large majority of the churches built in the earlier period of the great awakening, the abbey of Cluny, as well as being too small for the increasing house, was falling into ruins. So Abbot Hugh began to build in 1089 his new abbey.

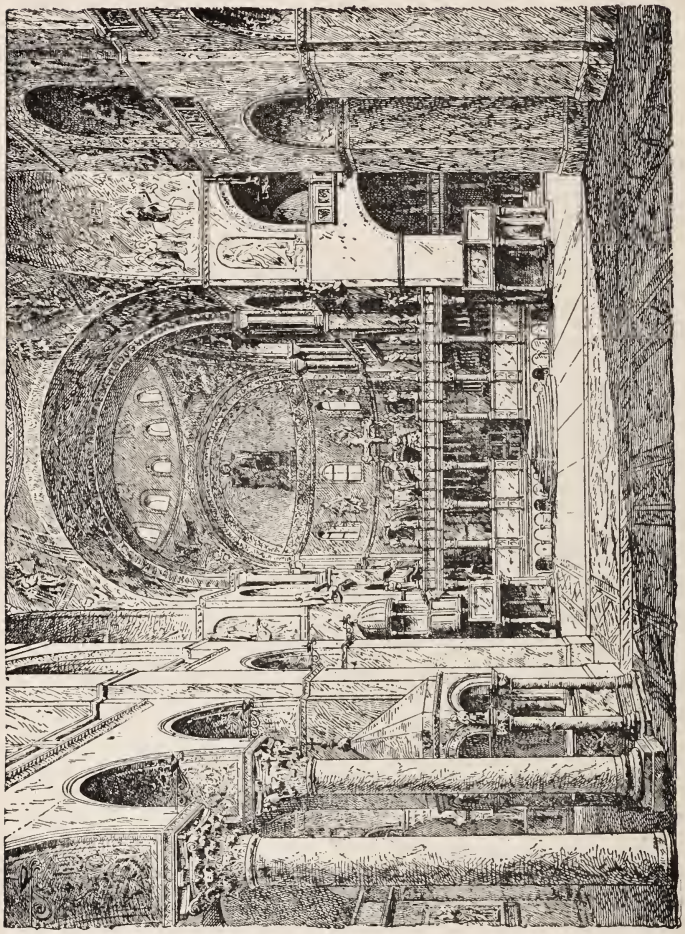
The legends of Cluny tell us how S. Peter himself revealed to the monk-architect Gauzon in a dream the plan of the new church, which, in truth, when completed, was the greatest of all the great churches of the West. Generally, its proportions were 580 feet in length and 120 feet in width, and it remained fairly perfect almost

to our days. Its ruin in the end was owing to the fury of the revolution in the last years of the eighteenth century, not to the ravages of time.

Church of S. Mark, Venice.

The great church-building work in that marvellous age on the continent of Europe has been thus graphically though roughly sketched. "S. Mark's at Venice was

not finished till the end of the eleventh century, to



Interior of the Church of S. Mark, Venice.

be by us freshly admired after eight hundred years.

The cathedral of Pisa, wonderful alike for its grand proportions and the charming completeness of its melodious details, was finished with the same century (the eleventh). The cathedrals of Siena, Modena, Parma, and other Italian cities, belong to the same age; while in Northern Europe, the new and urgent spiritual forces were equally breaking into sudden exhibition in immense and lovely structures."

"The church at Freyburg in Baden, in which Bernard afterwards preached the Crusade, belonged to this period.[1] Strasburg, Mayence, Trèves, Worms, Basel, Brussels, Dijon, bloomed into the beauty of their superb churches. The cathedral of Chartres, with its pointed arches, flying buttresses, and the marvellous glass which even the fires of Revolution have spared, was begun about A.D. 1060, though principally finished more than a century later. The cathedrals at Autun and Poitiers, the abbey church at Vézelai, with S. Stephen's at Caen, and many others, are of the same time. All Northern Europe was flowering into Christian architecture, delicate and mighty, as Alpine slopes with sudden exuberance clothe themselves in wealth of blooms when the icy fetters have been removed."[2]

[1] Of course most of those here named were greatly changed and modified in the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, like that great English church on which we are presently to dwell.

[2] Of course in this rough picture much in connection with these cathedrals in their completed form would require careful supplementing and explaining, even correcting, but I have given the striking passage verbatim from Dr. Storr's (of Brooklyn, New York) interesting and graphic "Lectures on S. Bernard of Clairvaux," published in 1892.

CHAPTER VII

ENGLAND IN THE TENTH CENTURY

In our own England, during the greater part of the ninth and tenth centuries, although the particular circumstances were somewhat different, the desolation of the Church was well-nigh as complete and far-reaching as on the continent of Europe. England was spared, it is true, the crushing calamity of the Hungarian invasion. But the Viking raids in our island were of a more disastrous and enduring character even than the barbarian invasions on the continent. These raids began in terrible earnest in A.D. 829, and for nearly fifty years they ceaselessly harassed unhappy England. And the desolation, especially in everything pertaining to the Church, which they had wrought in the island was too thorough and far-reaching to be repaired by the splendid successes of Alfred and the kings of his house. In Southern England, which Alfred and his successors had won back from the Danish Vikings, in the last years of the ninth century, the Church had recovered but only partially from the great disaster, when there followed a renewal of Viking wars lasting for many years, when Ethelred the Unready was king; and it was not until the eleventh century was far advanced that the great awakening of Christianity and the consequent passion for church building really reached England. It had begun, it is true, with the days of Canute and of the Confessor, but it was

interrupted by the Norman Conquest, and it was only when something like "stillness" had been effected by the bloody and stern work of William the Conqueror that the same phenomenon was visible in the great island as on the continent of Europe.

The picture painted by King Alfred's own hand, sometime in the last twenty years of the ninth century, gives a vivid representation of the state of the Church in England after the Danish Vikings had wrought their destruction. Alfred had driven them back from the southern and central districts of the island, and had again firmly established the Anglo-Saxon rule over the southern half of England. This was what he found when the Danish invasion had been rolled back into the lands north of the Humber. "The ruin that the Danes had wrought had been no mere material ruin. When they first appeared off her shores (roughly in the early years of the ninth century), England stood in the forefront of European culture; her scholars, her libraries, her poetry, had no rivals in the Western world. But all, or nearly all, of this culture had disappeared. The art and learning of Northumbria had been destroyed at a blow. The very Christianity of Mid-Britain was shaken . . . its letters and civilisation were more than shaken; they had vanished in the sack of the great abbeys of the Fens." [1]

The following are the words of the great Anglo-Saxon king: "I remembered also how I saw, before it had all been ravaged and burnt, how the churches throughout the whole of England stood filled with treasures and books, and there was also a great multitude of God's servants. . . . But *now*," wrote the king, "so clear was learning

[1] Green, "The Conquest of England," chap. ix.

decayed among English folk, that very few were there on this side the Humber that could understand their rituals in English, or translate aught of Latin into English, and I think there were not many beyond the Humber. So few of these were there, that I cannot bethink me of a single one south of the Thames when I came into the kingdom. . . . Thanks be to God that we have now some teachers in our stalls."[1] Again the scholar king, grieving over the decadence of all learning, and mourning over "the little fruit which the ecclesiastics of his day had of the books which they possessed" (such as the works of Bede, for instance, because they were written in Latin and not in their own language), wondered that the great and wise men who were formerly in the English nation had not translated books written in Latin into their own native tongue. He writes his own reply to his question thus: "I soon answered myself, and said that they did not think men would ever become so careless, and that learning would so decay."

Briefly to sum up: For some fifty years before the victory of Alfred, the state of the Church in England was dreary in the extreme. Everything seemed ruined. Alfred, it is true, accomplished something of a revival in the south and midland districts, but more than half of the island remained under the Viking rule. After Alfred's death in A.D. 901, during the first half of the tenth century, things in the Church made no progress; on the contrary, everything in the Church seemed rather going backwards. The ceaseless wars waged by his gallant successors against the Danish possessors of the north of the island, were sadly inimical to any progress. After Athelstan's vic-

[1] Preface to Alfred's translation of "Gregory's Pastoral," written by the king himself.

torious reign, something like "stillness" prevailed over a great part of England, and enabled Dunstan, a really great churchman, again to build up in a measure Church life in England, but the renewal of the Danish supremacy in the latter years of Dunstan's life in the days of Ethelred, threw again all things into confusion. Under the strong rule of Canute once more something of a Church revival took place, which, with some interruption during the short reigns of his sons after his death, continued steadily under Edward the Confessor. Then the Norman Conquest again arrested all progress for a season. But when the confusion and troubles of the Norman Conquest were in some measure quieted down, then the great revival which witnessed the building of the houses of God we are about to speak of began in earnest. The following little table of dates will illustrate the story of the ninth and tenth centuries in England we have been briefly sketching:—

A.D.	
829	Coming of the Vikings.
871	Alfred's great victory over the Vikings. Partial stillness in southern England.
901	Death of Alfred.
901–978	Kings of the House of Alfred.
946–978	Dunstan's influence.
978–1016	The Danes again obtain general supremacy in England.
1016–1035	Canute's reign.
1042–1066	Edward the Confessor.
1066–1070	The Norman Conquest.
1070	Stillness in England. The great revival of Church building under Lanfranc, the Norman archbishop, began in real earnest.

On the whole, it may be safely affirmed that during

the two centuries of gloom, the ninth and tenth, the condition of the Church in England was somewhat less deplorable than that of the Church on the continent of Europe.

There was a period certainly, roughly calculated, extending over about fifty years, from A.D. 829 to A.D. 871, when, owing to the cruel and generally successful Viking invasions, Church life was well-nigh swept out of our island. The picture drawn by the great Alfred, above quoted, tells us how dreary and forlorn was the state to which England had been reduced when he succeeded in partially rolling back the torrent of Danish invaders.

But then he partially succeeded in restoring Church life in England, and for the rest of the Anglo-Saxon period, from 871 to 1066, the Church lived, and was again a power in the land, though it must be confessed the Church life thus restored was, after all, but a maimed one; but it was, comparatively speaking, free from those awful crimes of simony and evil-living which were the sad characteristics of the Church on the continent of Europe during this dark time. The noble impulse given by King Alfred to its life almost crushed out in the Danish raids, never again died out. No such personality as that of Alfred appeared in the Church of the continent after Charlemagne passed away in 914.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WAVE OF RELIGIOUS REVIVAL REACHES ENGLAND

THE mighty wave of the religious revival, which so powerfully stirred men's hearts early in the eleventh century, gradually spread throughout Central and Northern Europe, only reaching Rome and changing the character of the Papacy when the century had run well-nigh half its course. The "wave" naturally affected England, but for a long period its operation in the island was less noticeable than on the continent of Europe. The reason no doubt was, first, the comparatively little contact of the Church of England with foreign thought, and secondly, in England things were not so evil in the Church as in France and Italy. In England, we must remember, between A.D. 871 and A.D. 1066, evil was largely kept at bay by the noble work and example of Alfred, and somewhat later by the powerful and healthy influence of that great churchman, Dunstan, by the strong religious instincts of the great Dane, King Canute, and lastly by the quiet holy life and reign of Edward the Confessor.

But such facts as the building of the abbey of Waltham by Earl Harold, and the erection of the mighty abbey of Westminster by King Edward—Westminster Abbey being not only by far the largest church in England, but one of the grandest on this side of the Alps—tell us that the newly-awakened fervour *had* reached the island kingdom, and was bearing its fruits. But though in England

the great awakening in its full strength was somewhat delayed, it came at last, and in good earnest.

On the Continent, after the reform of Rome in the middle of the century, the immense impulse which had come to the Church was wonderfully quickened. The monastics, the new orders and the old, multiplied with strange rapidity. The Cluniacs, though still maintaining their ascendency, stood no longer alone. In Italy and Germany, as in France, new houses of fresh orders kept arising, new churches of a size hitherto undreamed of were designed and gradually built.

The last years of the century witnessed the beginning of another Benedictine reform, whose monks, under the famous appellation of Cistercians, positively outnumbered eventually all the earlier foundations. Nor was this religious fervour confined to the clergy and monks, but more or less it permeated all ranks and orders among the laity. The great Pope Hildebrand, once a Cluniac monk, under the name of Gregory VII., conceived the magnificent idea of a general European crusade, which should conquer for Christendom the holy places of the Gospels in the Holy Land, desecrated by the conquering disciples of Mahommed. This was in the year 1074. Hildebrand did not live to see his mighty project realised. But one of his immediate successors, Urban II., ten years after the death of Hildebrand, succeeded in uniting all the peoples of the West in the stupendous enterprise. And so the wonderful eleventh century closed. Never before had Christianity exercised so wide, so general an influence over the nations.

In *England*, when the Norman Conquest was completed, the year 1070 witnessed again something like stillness

in the long-harassed country. The Anglo-Saxon Archbishop of Canterbury being formally deposed, the first place in the English Church was filled by King William the Conqueror's friend and chief adviser Lanfranc, who was without doubt the ablest and, after Pope Gregory VII. (Hildebrand), the most renowned of the ecclesiastics of that age. The new Norman archbishop at once set himself to remodel, and in some respects to reform, the Church in England. Quietly, with few overt acts of high-handed tyranny, William and Lanfranc in a comparatively short time filled the great places in the English Church with Normans and other foreigners whom they could fully trust to carry out their policy, and as the bishoprics and abbeys fell vacant through death, they were filled up by the nominees of the king and the archbishop. In a few cases deposition anticipated death, but, as a rule, the changes among the bishops and abbots were carried out without violence. Most of these appointments, as would have been expected, considering Lanfranc's high, pure character, were conscientiously made, and the men thus chosen to rule the island Church were wise, good men, well fitted to carry out the changes and reforms desired by Lanfranc.

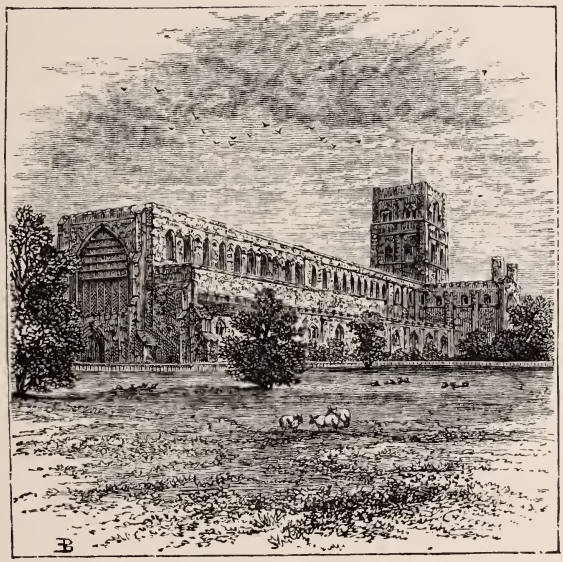
The most striking of these changes and reforms were: (1), the altered relations of England and the Papacy. In the reign of William the Conqueror and in the Primacy of Lanfranc began that long line of Legates from the Pope exercising their great, though at first undefined, powers, markedly influencing the work and action of the Church of England, until the fall of Wolsey under Henry VIII. (2), The great revival and reform of monasticism in England. The Benedictines were enormously multiplied, while the new reformed orders began to send considerable

colonies to England. This wonderful increase in monasteries and in their foundations continued without a break all through the reign of the Conqueror and the Norman kings of his house and during the period of the Angevin Henry II. These, perhaps, constituted for the time the most marked of the ecclesiastical changes in our island. (3) Besides this great change in English Church life, several of the bishoprics were removed from their old seats into the more populous centres, such as Lincoln, the older Salisbury, Bath, Chichester, and Norwich, in place of the ancient episcopal homes of Dorchester, Sherborne and Ramsbury, Wells, Selsey, Elmham. (4) Within the Church the marriage of priests, which had been to some extent permitted in Anglo-Saxon times, was sternly forbidden, thus carrying out one of the great principles which actuated the far-seeing designs of Hildebrand and the great continental teachers. These teachers aimed at the establishment of the clergy as a distinct order cut off from all ties of citizenship and kindred.

The result of the great changes and reforms of Lanfranc undoubtedly raised the standard of the English Church intellectually and morally; above all, it brought the great island Church into more immediate touch with the mighty wave of religious enthusiasm which was passing over continental Europe; but, on the other hand, it weakened its insular independence, making it more like the other Churches of the West. The Church of England henceforth was no longer, as in the days of Canute and Edward the Confessor, a purely national Church, but virtually it became and continued all through the Middle Ages a province of a vast foreign ecclesiastical empire, whose centre and capital was Rome.

One great fact almost immediately resulted from this

putting England in close touch with the continent of Europe. With *this* our little present study is especially connected. The wave of religious enthusiasm which, as the monk Raoul Glaber tells us, stirred men's hearts to *build* everywhere new houses of prayer in inconceivable numbers, and with a hitherto undreamed of magnificence



Abbey Church of S. Albans.

at last reached our island, and very soon after the year 1070 the great building work really began in England. The new Norman bishops, and in not a few instances the new Norman abbots of the English monasteries, set themselves to convert the old churches of their sees and their religious houses into lordly cathedrals and stately

abbey churches; such churches which, with one or two solitary exceptions, had never been seen before in this island. They arose with incredible swiftness in all parts of England—to take a few notable instances—on the hill of Lincoln, on the cliff of Durham by the rushing Wear, in the fen-lands of Ely, in the Severn-watered meadows of Gloucester, Tewkesbury, and Worcester; at Norwich, Rochester, and Canterbury, in the east of the island; at York, Southwell, and S. Albans in the midland counties; at Ripon, and Carlisle, in the more northern districts; at Winchester and Chichester in the south. In all these and in many other historic centres were great churches completed before the end of the eleventh or in the early years of the twelfth century. Stupendous houses of prayer and teaching were designed, and many of them finished in the days of Lanfranc, or in the years immediately following. These mighty piles in all their changeless solemn beauty exist still; in most of them, it is true, the taste or want of taste of succeeding generations has changed, improved, or marred the grand work and simple telling decorations of the first master builders. But the plan and the designs, and, in some well-known instances the bulk of the original work of our noblest minster churches remain, as in the great building days of the first famous Norman king and his minister, the archbishop and scholar, Lanfranc, and of their immediate successors.

CHAPTER IX

CHURCH BUILDING IN ENGLAND AFTER A.D. 1070

Writers, in speaking of these great churches, are in the habit of summarily disposing of the question of their vast size, by alluding to them as belonging to the dominant fashion of the day, as being instances of the grand conception of the Norman prelates and archbishops, as though the great churches of the last quarter of the eleventh century were "great" because of the pride and taste of the building ecclesiastics of the day—of men like Lanfranc and Serlo, Gundulf and Remigius, William of Warelwast, and William Carilef. The truth really is, *these vast buildings satisfied a want—they were needed for the worshippers.* The wonderful religious revival of this century had enormously multiplied the worshippers in all lands. The number of professed "religious," too, as we have already remarked, had increased almost beyond conception, and the numbers of lay people who thronged the services were multiplied in almost like proportion, and in England when the great wave of piety had really reached the island, the same results, visible on the continent of Europe, demanded the sudden increase in the size of the buildings, so noticeable in the great Norman churches built in this period. To take a conspicuous though perhaps an extreme instance: the Benedictine monastery of S. Peter's, Gloucester, contained at the period of the Norman Conquest only some half-dozen

professed monks. Under Serlo, the Conqueror's chaplain, the first Norman abbot, these numbers had increased to a hundred.

We have here only noticed a few of the grander and more conspicuous abbeys and minsters, but a crowd of lesser churches were dotted in vast numbers through the length and breadth of the land. It is singular how, after some 800 years, what a vast number of Norman churches of all sizes, or of churches containing Norman work, remain in well-nigh every district in England. Of a truth, although somewhat later, owing to the circumstances above related, than on the continent of Europe, before the century (the eleventh) had closed, England, too, had put on that "white robe of churches" which Raoul Glaber, the Benedictine, alludes to as one of the most conspicuous signs of the great revival. But, although somewhat tardily, in no country were so many noble churches built, and with such extraordinary rapidity as in England.

Now as men gaze on these vast piles, some of them beautiful and strong as in those far-back days when William the Conqueror and his friend and minister, Lanfranc, and the men they chose as the chief ministers of the English Church, first planned and then proceeded to erect those mighty houses of prayer—they ask naturally and wonderingly whence came the gold necessary for these vast and most costly works so plentifully scattered over the country—whence came the enormous resources required for such a number, and in many cases such mighty buildings? We may reply with little hesitation, that in England the great wave of religious zeal, when it fairly reached our shores, was aided by a peculiar state of things which existed in no other country in Europe, by "a something" which explains the

reason for this wonderful liberality on the part of the laymen to the Church of England, which supplies a reason for their almost boundless expenditure on the Church fabrics, great and small, which have ever since excited the wonder and admiration of thinking men.

That "something" is capable of explanation. While the conquest of England was in progress, neither William nor his chieftains appeared conscious of the awful wrong they were working. But when all was over, and the hideous aspect of the brilliant feat of arms, termed the Norman Conquest, was unveiled, not a few of those mighty followers of Norman William, the men who had profited by the iniquity of the Conquest, saw at length what a terrible deed had been accomplished. It was a wild and ruthless age, and men recked little of the suffering and woe of those around them, but there was a new, strange spirit abroad, a spirit of religious awe which permeated, as we have seen, all sorts and conditions of men, and not a few of those Norman nobles were, when the Conquest was over, powerfully influenced by it. Hence the attempt to still in some degree the remorse stirred up by the sense of the great wrong, to atone for the misery and destruction they had wrought, by lavish donations to the cause of that God whom they justly felt they had deeply offended. This is in all probability the cause of the enormous gifts which the Church received in the years following the Anglo-Norman settlement of A.D. 1070. It is a fact that more religious foundations were established in England, and churches and abbeys built in the days of the kings of the Anglo-Norman House and of Henry II., than during the whole preceding or subsequent period of English history.[1]

[1] That a vast proportion of the Norman abbeys and churches were abbeys and churches of "expiation" is undoubtedly a fact which has

The Anglo-Norman churches and abbeys were thus largely churches and abbeys of expiation.

As examples of the great churches built in this age we will instance, with a very few necessary details, just five or six of the more prominent of the churches erected in the latter years of this eleventh century. We can, after 800 years, feast our eyes upon their massive, awful beauty. They give us some notion how the

scarcely received sufficient notice. The stubborn but ill-conceived resistance to William's conquering forces during the four or five years which followed the battle of Hastings, compelled the Norman Duke to act as "conqueror" rather than as the lawful king, the rightful successor to the Confessor he claimed to be, and vast confiscations proceeded to mark his slow but irresistible progress from Hastings to Exeter, from Exeter to York, from York to Durham. The enormous confiscations without doubt inflicted untold sufferings upon thousands. According to common report 60,000 knights received their fees or rather their livings from the Conqueror. The numbers probably are exaggerated, but the race of Anglo-Danish and English nobility, the Anglo-Saxon Earls, and the greater Thegns disappeared. But no political exigency can ever excuse the awful harrying of the country north of York, or the desolation of the great district known as the New Forest. There was indeed bitter oppression; much cruel wrong inflicted by William and his chieftains on the great masses of Anglo-Saxon society, especially on the higher grades of that society. And this cruel wrong was recognised by the Normans themselves. In A.D. 1070 or 1072, a general penance was decreed by the Norman prelates, confirmed by the delegates from the See of Rome on all, from the highest to the lowest, who had shared in the deeds which established William on the throne. [Freeman throws doubt, without assigning any sufficient reason, on the genuineness of the documents which relate the story of this penance. Palgrave, however, accepts this penance decree without hesitation.] The Chroniclers, Orderic, Wace in his poem "Le Roman de Rou," and Matthew Paris, all with more or less detail dwell on William's penitence when dying, for the cruel wrong he and his men-at-arms had done to conquered England. The words of Orderic which he puts into the mouth of the conqueror are remarkable: "Sic multa millia pulcerrimæ gentis senum juvenumque, proh dolor, funestus trucidavi," and so are the words of Matthew Paris, "Multum se confitebatur peccasse in Anglorum nobilitatem, quos falsis decepit pollicitis."

great Anglo-Norman builders of the "Revival" we have dwelt upon, expressed in stone the religious feelings of that strange age. At Canterbury Lanfranc found the cathedral in ruins, and in seven years restored the church from its very foundations, and "rendered it," we are told, "nearly perfect after the Norman manner." In A.D. 1093 William Carilef began, and Ralph Flambard,

Peterborough Cathedral.

the minister-bishop of Rufus, by 1128 well-nigh completed, the matchless pile which to this day looks down upon the river Wear. It stands before us now much as the old Norman builders left it, simply peerless in its stern and rugged beauty, within and without perhaps the finest Romanesque church in England, some think in the world. In East Anglia, in Norwich

Cathedral, largely the work of Bishop Herbert of Losinga, commenced in the year 1096, we have the second largest nave in England, with its massive piers rising up 70 feet, presenting to the eye a marvellous vista of two tiers of round-headed arches resting on Norman shafts, the whole scarcely changed, though the colour and gold which once beautified the interior has vanished in the long centuries of wear and tear and partial neglect. In Ely the wondrous pile of S. Ethelreda still remains "the monarch of the Fen Lands," as it has been well termed. Hard by, the mighty Norman abbey of Peterborough is a noble example of a great Norman house of prayer, and has been well described as "expressing the aims and ideals of the Norman builders of the age of the Conquest." The solemn repose of the Norman nave of Peterborough is almost unbroken by ornamentation, and yet the triple row of arches gives an appearance of richness beyond compare. The monotony of the stony whiteness of the vast interior with its death-like hue, it must be remembered, was broken in the early years of the twelfth century with the wealth of colour and gold with which the Norman artists veiled much of the white stone of massive arch and pillar. The gold and colour, alas, have long disappeared.

In the south-west of the island, in the country known as the Severn Lands, the Norman builders were especially busy, and splendid specimens of their craft, and of the devotion and lavish liberality of the conquerors, yet remain in the noble abbeys of Gloucester and Tewkesbury. Singularly little interfered with in the eight centuries which have elapsed since they were consecrated to the service of Almighty God, the imposing naves of Gloucester and of its twin sister at Tewkesbury, with their lofty arcades of gigantic columns crowned with huge round arches of the

well-known Romanesque type, bear their witness to the daring and grand conception of the great Norman building abbots of the end of the eleventh century.

Nowhere else in Europe are such mighty columns to be seen. Though in exquisite grace and perfect proportions, they fall short of Durham, or even of Peterborough and Norwich, yet in grandeur and majesty these vast churches stand absolutely unrivalled. We speak alone of the naves, for in both these stately churches the eastern limbs—the

Battle Abbey.

choirs — have been altered to suit a later architectural fashion. These will suffice us as prominent examples of "the white robe of churches" with which the Normans covered the England of the last years of the eleventh and the early years of the twelfth centuries, the age when the great religious fervour in good earnest reached the shores of this great island. In the same period, too, arose the cathedral and abbey churches of Chichester, A.D. 1090–1120; Lincoln, A.D. 1086–1092; York, A.D. 1070–

1100; Rochester, A.D. 1083; Winchester, A.D. 1079–1093; Worcester, A.D. 1084; Carlisle, A.D. 1092; the mighty abbeys of S. Albans, A.D. 1077–1115, Evesham, Battle, Ripon Minster, Chester, and a host of others, not a few of them of vast dimensions, abbeys, minsters, collegiate churches, monastic churches,[1] parish churches, many of which, in whole or in large part, still bear the ineffaceable mark of the men who built them in that age of fervour and devotion.

[1] *Monastic Churches.*—Of these alone, in the days of William the Conqueror, that is, between 1070–1087, 45 new monasteries were founded; in the days of William Rufus, 25; of Stephen, 122; of Henry II., 124; of Richard Cœur-de-Lion, 44; of John, 62; of Henry III., 74. These numbers do not include colleges and hospitals, a goodly number, each of which possesses its church.

CHAPTER X

THE MEANING OF THE TERM "ROMANESQUE"

We have so far lightly sketched in "the story of the ages" which elapsed between the epoch of the "Peace of the Church," immediately following the edict of the Emperor Constantine, A.D. 313, and the death of the Emperor Charlemagne in A.D. 814. And with a little more fulness we have painted the dark period when the barbarian hordes of Northmen, Saracens, Hungarians, and others desolated the Western world, between the years A.D. 814, when Charlemagne died, and the years of the great religious awakening, commencing about A.D. 1003, dwelling especially on the mighty influence which the Burgundian monastery of Cluny had in this awakening, which resulted in the restoration of Christianity as a great and ever growing power from early in the eleventh century onwards.

During the first fifty or sixty years of the eleventh century we spoke of the earlier efforts of church builders to erect churches somewhat after the style of the builders of the earlier centuries which immediately followed the time of the "Peace of Constantine," and how in these fifty or sixty years their architectural skill, long disused, at first failed them, and how very soon these earlier errors were corrected; and, taught by the disasters which so generally befel their work, these men learned how to build more securely.

The White Robe of Churches

The second half of the eleventh century witnessed the rising throughout Europe of an infinite number of cathedrals, abbeys, and churches of varied sizes, many of them of *vast* dimensions. After A.D. 1070 we noticed that the wave of Church enthusiasm reached *England* in its full force, and, owing to peculiar and special circumstances which we have explained, an enormous zeal for church building was awakened in our island, and that then many of the great cathedrals and abbeys, still the pride and glory of our land, were erected apparently regardless of cost, with strange and even startling rapidity.

Now we propose to take one of these mighty English religious piles then erected as our special subject, and in detail to examine its various parts as we now see them, many of them little changed since those great builders and designers first designed and completed them with marvellous skill and forethought. And as we speak of the various parts of this vast abbey, now the well-known cathedral of Gloucester, we shall, as we come in turn to each of its main important divisions, trace the genesis, the development, and the history of that portion of the building from very early times. This we propose to do in the case of the *crypt*, the *nave*, the *transepts*, the *choir* and the *altar*, the *cloister*, and its immediate surroundings.

The example we have selected for our purpose is one of those great abbeys, the pride of the Severn Lands, in the west of England. Here, in the ancient Roman city of Gloucester, we possess an almost perfect instance of a mighty *Romanesque* abbey, mostly designed and probably well-nigh completed in the last quarter of that famous eleventh century which witnessed so marvellous a change in the fortunes of the Latin Church of the West. We style it *Romanesque*, although many of its architectural

features subsequently, as the centuries advanced, were changed and modified according to the fashion and taste of succeeding centuries. These changes will be presently noticed and explained.

We have twice dwelt with peculiar insistence upon the *vastness* of many of these new churches of the second half of the eleventh century: and we have shown that this feature, their great size, was owing to no mere fancy of the builders, to no fashion of the age, but that it simply represented a need of that period of the great religious revival. Men, laymen as well as professed "religious," thronged these houses of prayer in numbers never seen before. Nowhere more notably than in England is the difference in the dimensions of the religious buildings erected in the last years of the eleventh century, compared with the dimensions[1] of the religious buildings which had been erected in the times preceding the great Revival, more marked.

We have styled the mighty abbey of Gloucester we are going to describe a *Romanesque* abbey. What, now, is the meaning of the term?

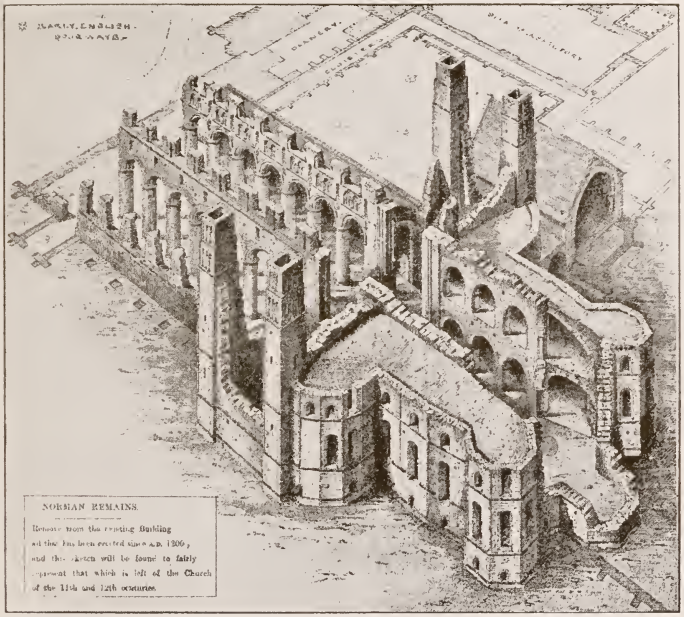
Romanesque is the equivalent of the French Romane, the latter being comparatively a new term, and seems to have been first generally used to express a great architec-

[1] The *smallness* of certainly the large majority of early churches in England is remarkable. The very few still remaining to us are conspicuous examples. The foundations of the Roman-British church at Silchester, the church of Aldhelm at Bradford-on-Avon, Earl Odda's church at Deerhurst (Gloucestershire), the wooden church at Greenstreet, Essex, are all very small. *After* the Conquest, from the year 1070 onwards, an *almost universal* destruction of the more important older ecclesiastical buildings took place. They were removed to make way for the grand and vast conceptions of Norman prelates and architects.

tural style by the French writer De Caumont, about A.D. 1825. It is a strange mistake which describes "Romanesque" as debased Roman architecture; it is an independent style of the highest historical interest, and although it may generally be called the round-arch architecture, it possesses somewhat different characteristics in different lands, *e.g.* in Norman England, in "Royal" France, in Aquitaine, in Germany. Romanesque architecture has a distinct date, commencing at the beginning of the eleventh century with the great Revival on which we have been dwelling. It continued to be *the* church architecture of the West through the great church-building age of the eleventh, and through most of the twelfth century, when in the last decade it gave place generally to Gothic forms. It has been well described by Quicherat as an "architectur qui renferne un peu d'Asiatique, un peu de Byzantin, beaucoup de Romain, et elle est ni Asiatique, ni Byzantine, ni Romain, mais *Romane.*"[1]

The far-back Ancestor of the Romanesque of the eleventh century was undoubtedly the earliest anti-classical Roman form before any Greek features were introduced into what is known as the classical Roman style. The great invention, for that it virtually was, of the cupola or dome in Constantinople, in the time of the Emperor Justinian, and subsequently very generally adopted in the East, and which largely influenced the Romanesque architecture in Italy and in the south of France, was unknown and completely ignored in Anglo-Norman architecture. The Dome—the great feature of

[1] *Compare De Caumont*, "Abécédaire d'Architecture Religieuse"; *Quicherat*, "Moyen age, Mélanges"; *Corroyer*, "Architecture Romane"; *Freeman*, "Norman Conquest," vol. v.; *Milman*, "Latin Christianity," vol. vi.; *Sir Gilbert Scott*, "Lectures on Mediæval Architecture," &c.



View of Romanesque Ambulatory from South Transept,
Gloucester Cathedral

the mighty Romanesque Church of S. Mark's at Venice, of S. Front in the south of France, and of many other less known religious buildings of this period—is absolutely non-existent in our old English architecture.[1]

The aspect of "Romanesque," the invention of the great eleventh century "Revival," is "religious in the extreme, it possesses"—as might be expected from the strange fervour of the age which introduced it—"a sternness and dignity almost unearthly—a majestic severity of sentiment, which seems, as it were, as if intended to rebuke the unpitying barbarity of the age, and to awe its rude and lawless spirits into obedience to the precepts of the Divine law. Its aspect is religious to the utmost extreme; but it expresses the stern, uncompromising severity of religion, rather than its more winning and elevating attributes."[2]

It was the spirit of Hildebrand and Lanfranc, and of the great Cluny fathers, who reformed the laxity and disorder which had arisen in the course of the misery and gloom of the ninth and tenth centuries. Somewhat fancifully, but not untruthfully, Romanesque has been painted as the "La Trappe" of architecture; as sheltering this austerest of orders, this sternest of brotherhoods, kneeling in ashes, and chaunting in an undertone, with bowed heads, none but penitential psalms. Its massive forms speak of the fear of sin—of the dread of a God whose wrath could only be appeased by the Advent

[1] Freeman ("Norman Conquest," vol. v. chap. xxvi.), however, has an interesting theory respecting the unacknowledged influence of the Byzantine dome—"Wherever a central lantern, be it an octagonal cupola or simply a square tower, forms the dominant crown of the building, we see an architectural trace of the great architectural invention of Eastern Rome. . . ."

[2] Sir Gilbert Scott, "Royal Academy Lectures," vol. i. lecture ii.

of the Son. Many cathedrals, of which Gloucester is a good example, as we shall presently see, austere at their birth, are cheerful and even smiling as they are completed,[1] when the stern and gloomy forms of Romanesque gave place gradually to the lighter and more graceful Gothic, with its exquisite and touching fancies. The older and more austere style imperceptibly melted into more ornamental forms, with their marvellous and elaborate symbolism—the gloom and comparative darkness which shrouded the massive arches and gigantic shafts of the earlier builders being dispelled by the mighty windows of translucent jewelled glass—the glory of the Gothic schools, which in the last years of the twelfth and through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries replaced the Romanesque builders of the first age of the "Revival."

The great structural feature of the Romanesque builders was undoubtedly the introduction, or more accurately the reintroduction, of the stone *vault*. The builders found the churches of Western Europe, like the early Basilicas, for the most part covered with timbered roofs — easily destroyed, often the prey of fire.

It is interesting to mark how, gradually, they *felt* their way to this new feature in church architecture. We have already noticed the failure and collapse of their earlier efforts during the first half of the eleventh century. In the second half they discovered the lost secret of vaulting; this vaulting, in the ninth and tenth centuries, had been used, with rare exceptions, only in the case of quite small and narrow crypts. In many, however, of the great abbeys which arose in the second half of the building cen-

[1] See Huysman, "La Cathédrale," chap. iii.

tury—the eleventh—we find the side aisle, and sometimes the apse at the east end, skilfully covered with a stone vault; but the large space of the nave was not as yet undertaken. The vaulting of larger spaces was really never attempted till quite the last days of the Romanesque builders;[1] so in Gloucester we find both the south and north aisles were stone vaulted, while the roof of the nave was covered with a wooden ceiling. The original Romanesque vaulting of the north aisle still remains, an example of their beautiful enduring work, as far as they dared undertake it, in the matter of roofing. The crypt of Gloucester, as might have been expected, is vaulted, the space so covered in the crypt being comparatively narrow.

[1] There are, however, in the south of France some exceptions to the rule. The early vaulting of large spaces appears in such mighty churches as S. Sernin, at Toulouse, where a great barrel vault was erected as early as the closing years of the eleventh century. This important church was consecrated by Pope Urban II.

CHAPTER XI

THE STORY OF GLOUCESTER

In the second century of the Christian era, Gloucester was already a considerable frontier fortress of the Roman conquerors. After a time, upon the lines of that important fortified camp, which Claudius and Hadrian originally built upon the banks of the Severn waters over against the wild and turbulent tribes of the Silures of Southern Wales, arose the great place of arms we know as Gloucester, which soon became the chief city and emporium of all the Severn Lands. The Roman city is with us still, *beneath our feet.* A spade or pickaxe can at this moment be scarcely used in parts of the modern city without disclosing the mighty wall of the Italian conqueror, the substructure of a temple or of a municipal building, or the discoloured mosaics of a temple. After some 300 years the Roman Legion left, summoned back to defend Italy from the barbarian hordes from the North, which in the fifth century were threatening the fatherland. For about 150 years, after the period of the Roman life in Britain came to an end, an impenetrable mist, as far as history is concerned, settled over Gloucester; probably during this century and a half the old Roman provincial life went on much as before, though on a narrower and less magnificent scale.

But this came to an end too. Through the dim mist which had settled over Gloucester after A.D. 409, we

VIEW OF ROMAN GLOUCESTER

catch sight of a terrible battle between the Northmen invaders and the British provincials. At the battle of Deorham, in the neighbourhood of Aquæ-Solis, the modern Bath, the prince or petty king of Gloucester, among other British chieftains, was slain. The battle and rout of Deorham took place in A.D. 577, and Gloucester straightway, with other important places, notably Bath (Aquæ-Solis) and Cirencester (Corinium), fell into the hands of the Northern conquerors, who were West-Saxons under a chief named Ceawlin.

For about 100 years after the fight at Deorham, as far as we know, Gloucester lay desolate and ruined. This brings us nearly to the end of the seventh century. Henceforward we are standing on surer ground as we proceed with our story. A very ancient historical document of high antiquity, printed in Dugdale's "Monasticon," many of the details of which are in the main supported by the annals of the great Benedictine House which subsequently was founded at Gloucester, tells us how, towards the end of the seventh century, the North-folk conquerors of the Severn Lands became Christianised, and how a certain under-king Osric, a near kinsman of Ethelred the Northman over-king of the Mercians, *founded the abbey of Gloucester*. In the first instance, the rulers of this newly founded religious house were abbesses, and the new monastery, founded no doubt in the first instance as a missionary establishment with the view of Christianising the neighbouring districts, was one of those singular double foundations not uncommon among Celtic people, containing monks and nuns, dwelling, however, entirely apart, but under the general rule of an abbess, like the famous religious house of Whitby under the princess Hilda (A.D.

614 to 680). This Hilda of Whitby was a kinswoman of Osric, who probably founded his new Gloucester Abbey on the lines of his kinswoman Hilda's house at Whitby. Osric's sister, Kyneburga, became the first abbess of Gloucester Abbey, and eventually this Osric, who subsequently succeeded to the throne of Northumbria, was in A.D. 729 interred in the Gloucester church which he had founded, and his honoured remains, through all the changing fortunes of the great church, have been carefully preserved, and now (A.D. 1899) lie in the place of honour on the north side of the altar or Holy Table in the choir of the present cathedral. This Osric, like Hilda, and Ethelred the Mercian king above alluded to, belonged to the old royal stock of Deira, south of the Northumbrian district, and claimed descent from Odin, the deified hero of Norse mythology.

After Kyneburga, Osric's sister, abbesses continued to rule in the Gloucester monastery, ladies apparently of high dignity, until the year 767. The last of these bears the name, strange among the North-folk, of Eva. Then succeeded a period of war and tumult, and the religious house of Gloucester for some fifty years lay deserted and desolate. But in A.D. 823, Beornwulf, king of Mercia, rebuilt it and changed its form, placing in it secular clergy, for the most part married, and living much as laymen, though under a prescribed rule of life. This arrangement lasted about 200 years, when again the form of the religious house was changed by King Canute, who introduced the Benedictine order—this was in the year 1032. Gloucester continued a Benedictine monastery from the time of Canute until the final suppression of monasteries in 1540 under Henry VIII.

The monastery, probably including the church, was

destroyed by fire, but through the exertions of Aldred, Bishop of Worcester, afterwards Archbishop of York, the abbey church was rebuilt from the very foundation, and was completed in the year 1048. It was this Aldred who placed the crown of England on the heads of Harold the Saxon and William the Norman Conqueror. Some portion of this abbey of Aldred certainly still exists in the great Romanesque church of Gloucester, which in all its glory and beauty, though many changes have passed over it, is with us still. When Aldred completed his building work here, Edward the Confessor was living.

The following little table of dates will serve to illustrate the foregoing brief record of the fortunes of Gloucester up to the close of the Anglo-Saxon period.

The Roman city was founded in the course of the second century.

The Roman Legion left Britain and Gloucester .	409
For 160–170 years petty (native) British kings ruled in the city.	
Ceawlin, the West Saxon, destroyed the city . .	577
Osric, the Mercian sub-king, founds the religious House of Gloucester. His sister, Kyneburga, became abbess	681
Abbesses continue to rule it until	767
[The abbey of Osric was deserted for about fifty years.]	
Beornwulf, king of Mercia, rebuilt it, and gave it to secular priests. They held it some 200 years .	823
King *Canute* gave the abbey to the Benedictines .	1032
The abbey was burnt, and was rebuilt by Bishop *Aldred* of Worcester in the seventh year of King *Edward the Confessor*[2]	1048–9[1]

[1] The "Historia Monasterii" of Abbot Froucester gives A.D. 1058 as the date of Aldred's Church; 1048 is, however, specified in the "Memoriale."

[2] The substance of the facts relating to the early history of Gloucester

The White Robe of Churches

In the reign of Edward the Confessor, A.D. 1042–1066, Gloucester became, and continued during the reign of William the Conqueror, the place where the king wore his crown at the Christmas Feast as he wore it at Winchester at Easter. It was emphatically "a royal city," and became one of the chief places for state gatherings for the whole kingdom, one of the three capitals of England, the other two being Westminster and Winchester. Very many of the principal events in English history happened at Gloucester during the reign of the Confessor, of William the Conqueror, and of William Rufus. The Confessor especially seems to have been constantly here, and doubtless worshipped in the new minster built by Aldred, and apparently completed in the seventh year of his reign.

During the troublous times which followed the death of Edward the Confessor the Benedictine house of Gloucester faded away. Other circumstances, too, had apparently contributed in the latter years of the Confessor to the falling off in the number of its dwellers, and in A.D. 1072, when the Norman Serlo was appointed Abbot, we read that

here given are in the main derived from the "Historia Monasterii S. Peter, Glôucestriæ," an account of the monastery from the foundation to the early years of Richard II., usually ascribed to Abbot Froucester (A.D. 1381–1412). The registers of the abbey were put together in Froucester's time from materials possessed by that abbot. Some few of the details given here are from the important "Memoriale ecclesiæ Gloucestriæ compendiarium," which is printed, as above stated, by Dugdale, "Monasticon Anglicanum." The original of this document cannot be found. An English translation of the time of James I. is in the Lansdowne MS. Some yet earlier memoranda relating to what happened at Gloucester as early as A.D. 189, appear in the "Memoriale." But, as the writer tells us, he can give no certain warrant for these very early particulars. They have, in consequence, been omitted in the above short epitome of the history of Gloucester Abbey.

only two monks and eight boys (probably novices) occupied the monastery.

We now have come to the time when it is clear that most of this great Romanesque cathedral was completed. In 1072, about six years after the battle of Hastings, the Norman Conquest was virtually over, and England, though sorely wounded, was at peace, then under William and Lanfranc, as we have noticed above, the great wave of Church awakening passed over the land. As in so many other ecclesiastical centres, Gloucester, its monastery and its abbey, was placed under the rule of a Norman ecclesiastic. It was a rough, stern piece of work, that Norman invasion and conquest, bringing in its wake much suffering, inflicting many cruel wrongs, but in many ways it brought new life, new aims, noble purposes, especially into the Church. One of the Conqueror's chaplains, Serlo, a monk of S. Michael's (Mont S. Michel) was chosen for the task of renovating the decaying religious house of Gloucester. This Serlo seems to have been a man of singular power and ability, devoted to Lanfranc and Lanfranc's school, and thoroughly imbued with the new spirit which was then inspiring the Church far and wide on the continent of Europe with new life and higher aspirations. Like most of the great Norman ecclesiastics, Serlo was a great builder. Appointed abbot in 1072, he does not seem to have begun his building operations before 1089. During this period of sixteen or seventeen years, he evidently enormously increased the reputation of his "house." From being but a small decaying community of Benedictines, under his rule it became one of the largest and most prosperous of the English monastic establishments. The old abbey of Aldred was, as years passed on, manifestly

too small for Serlo's largely increased community, too small for the crowds of lay-folk who worshipped in the abbey. As we have already noticed, the great building prelates of the close of the eleventh century, and through much of the twelfth, in so many instances, rebuilt and enlarged their churches, the great awakening of religion bringing an enormous addition not only to the professed *workers*, but also to the *worshippers*.

We perhaps shall never be able *exactly* to discriminate in our Romanesque abbey of Gloucester how much of the work of Aldred, who lived in the Confessor's days, remains to us, more perhaps than the modern antiquary usually seems to think. Undoubtedly the western limb of the great church is Serlo's, including the nave with its vast cylindrical columns and the two transepts, although the Norman Romanesque work in the transepts is largely veiled by the building operations of the fourteenth century. The exact date of the Romanesque of the eastern limb, the choir portion, is a more difficult problem to solve, while the crypt is a still greater difficulty, as we shall see when we come to describe it in detail. Here probably much of the work of Aldred remains.

A stranger gazing for the first time on the solemn beauty of the pale grey mass of Gloucester Cathedral, knowing nothing of its story, would wonder if he were told how *that* was the great "Romanesque" abbey about to be described. For from whatever side the cathedral is approached, owing to the changes made by the builders of the fourteenth century, there is little of Romanesque in its outward appearance. Looking at it from the College green or Close on the north side, a long row of Decorated windows of the time of Edward I. meets the eye. Higher

still are seen the Perpendicular clerestory windows of a later period, surmounted by parapets of a like date; above, the mighty tower, unmistakably a fifteenth century creation, with its inimitable grace and beauty, dominating the whole. All this seems to negative the idea of its being a "Romanesque" building; only on a closer view, as one wanders round the charmed pile, the round-headed windows of the great eastern limb of the cathedral, and the tall flanking towers of the transepts, with the same small round-headed windows, give unmistakable evidence of an older school of builders than the men of the new architectural schools of the Plantagenet Edwards having been at work, at some remote period, on the mighty building.

But any illusion that Gloucester Cathedral was the offspring of a later period, when Decorated or Perpendicular architecture, when Gothic in one form or another had displaced for ever the older forms of architecture, is dispelled when the threshold of the southern porch or of the western doors is once crossed.

The stranger finds himself, as the outer portals close behind him, in a building which, perhaps more than any other of the mighty eleventh century abbeys in this or any other land, at once shows him what was a vast Romanesque church of the first great building age of the awakening of the Church to real life. No ornament of any kind serves to distract his attention; no vista of round arch piled on round arch, as at Peterborough, or Norwich, or Durham, charms the eye with its perplexing beauty of detail. The nave of Gloucester is sternly, austerely simple. Vast pillars of most unusual height, coupled together with immense round arches, support a small triforium and clerestory, which at first are hardly

noticed. The vista of vast columns and the mighty round arches surmounting them completely fill the thoughts. Here we have a most conspicuous example of the round arched style. There is no mistaking the school which designed *these*. It is indeed "Romanesque"; some would say even exaggerated Romanesque. Nowhere in the world[1] is there anything like them. It would be a misuse of language to call this singular and impressive nave beautiful in the ordinary sense of the word. It is not beautiful, but it is something more—it is awe-inspiring. It suggests power, endurance, devotion, dread of the unseen world, the fear of God, rather than the love of God, and, perhaps more than any other building in the world, reveals to us the secret of the hearts of these Romanesque designers who learned their craft in the first fervour of the religious age which produced Hugh, abbot of Cluny, Hildebrand, best known as Pope Gregory VII., and Lanfranc, the minister and intimate of William the Conqueror—of the age which culminated in the wild, beautiful dream of the first and greatest crusade.

[1] Of course I except Tewkesbury Abbey, some ten miles north of Gloucester, but Tewkesbury was evidently built by the same architectural school, probably by the same master of his craft, as Gloucester, about ten years later. The nave is almost a copy of Gloucester, a little smaller, but save in these two abbeys of the Severn Lands we nowhere find similar features.

CHAPTER XII

THE CRYPT

We shall return to this nave in due course, after speaking of that part of the building which is manifestly, at least in part, of older date even than the nave, which was completed before the eleventh century had run its course.

The crypt is the oldest part of our abbey. We will henceforth preserve the title "abbey" in our "study," for the term "cathedral" only belongs to it *after* the suppression of the Benedictine house of Gloucester in the days of Henry VIII., A.D. 1540–41.

The crypt of Gloucester is of great size, ranking in extent and in dimensions with the more famous of the great crypts of the churches of the West.

To trace the origin of the "crypt," we must go back to the very early days of the Faith. In the first instance, it was simply a very small chamber dug out underground, in which in all secrecy were deposited the remains of some Christian, in many instances a martyr, whose memory was held in especial veneration. Over this underground chamber a little oratory or church was erected, the altar being placed immediately above the little sacred mortuary chamber. The crypt which contained the remains of the dead was called generally "the confessionary." The name crypt, from the Greek word *κρύπτειν*, to hide or conceal, speaks of the care with which the early Chris-

tians concealed the hallowed remains of one who was distinguished for devotion, who had been done to death for the "Faith." As time went on, these early confessionaries were often enlarged for the reception of more of the faithful dead whose memories were held in peculiar honour, while at the same time the original little oratory or chapel built over the "confessionary" became often a large church. The symbolism of the statement of Revelation vi. 9, where S. John relates how beneath the altar he saw the souls of the martyrs, no doubt contributed to, if it did not suggest, this early practice of erecting an altar exactly over the confessionary.

Gradually *after* the "Peace of the Church," in the days of Emperor Constantine, early in the fourth century, it seems to have been the custom to construct a considerable building under the church, known as the crypt. This was in fact the old confessionary, greatly enlarged. In it the tomb of the saint especially honoured in the city or the district, and to whose memory the church was originally dedicated, was carefully constructed, as, for instance, in the crypt of S. Benignus at Dijon, and in the crypt of S. Mary Magdalen, the Redeemer's friend, at Vézelay. Such highly-prized remains, however, were not always forthcoming, and as time went on, crypts were often constructed where no "confessionary" containing the body of a "saint" had previously existed, though of course the majority of the earlier crypts contained the bodies of one or more renowned holy persons. This custom of erecting churches over a crypt, large or small, although very general in the West,[1] was rarely, if ever,

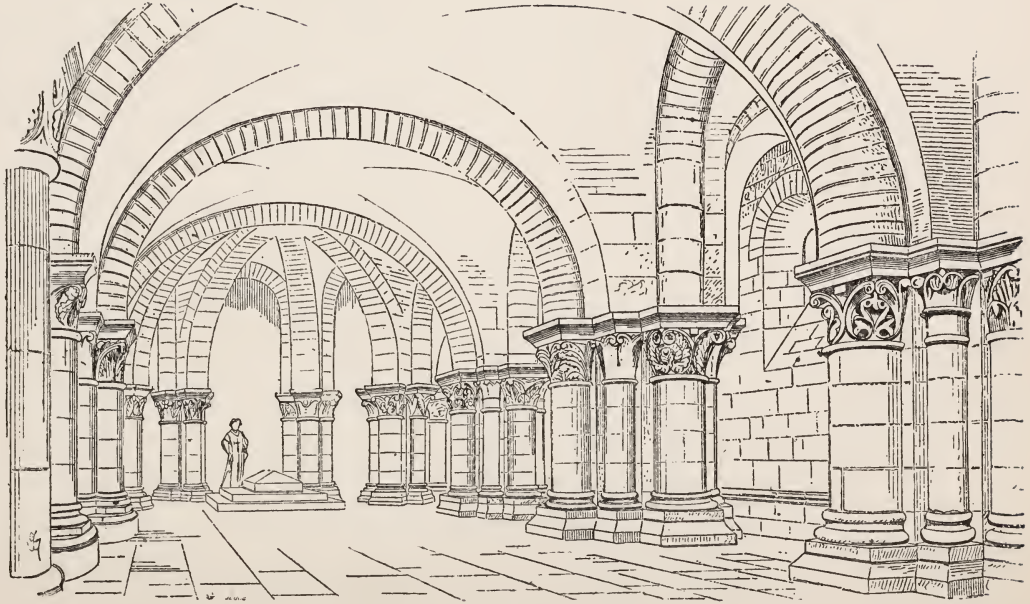
[1] *Quicherat*, in his "Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire," tells us how most of the Gallic churches erected in the Merovingian period (ninth century) possessed a crypt. Some of these are still existing.

practised in the East. It is singular that the very ancient Irish churches or oratories contain no confessionaries or crypts. This probably points to the *Eastern* origin of Irish Christianity. The churches whence they derived their knowledge of Christianity had no such custom. The crypt seems to have been peculiarly a *Latin* feature.

In the great awakening of the eleventh century the crypt became a common feature of the abbeys and churches of the West which were rebuilt and restored, or newly erected. In important churches they were not unfrequently of large dimensions. In some instances, as above stated, the original idea of their being the "confessionary," or tomb of a saint or martyr, was partly lost sight of. In Gloucester, for instance, no tradition of any such tomb is preserved. The crypt was simply an underground church.

Eadmer, the friend of Anselm, who filled the office of precentor of Canterbury Cathedral during the earlier years of the twelfth century, thus describes the crypt of the great Canterbury church, which was the most important of the Anglo-Saxon minsters, and had been restored and partially rebuilt by Archbishop Odo, A.D. 950. This church was destroyed by fire immediately after the Norman Conquest. The Canterbury monk tells us how he could bear witness to the state of the old church, for he remembered it as a boy at school.

After describing the position of the altar, he went on to say that "below was a crypt which the Romans term 'the Confessio'; and its vault was raised so high that the platform above it could only be reached by ascending many



Crypt of S. Eutropius at Saintes.

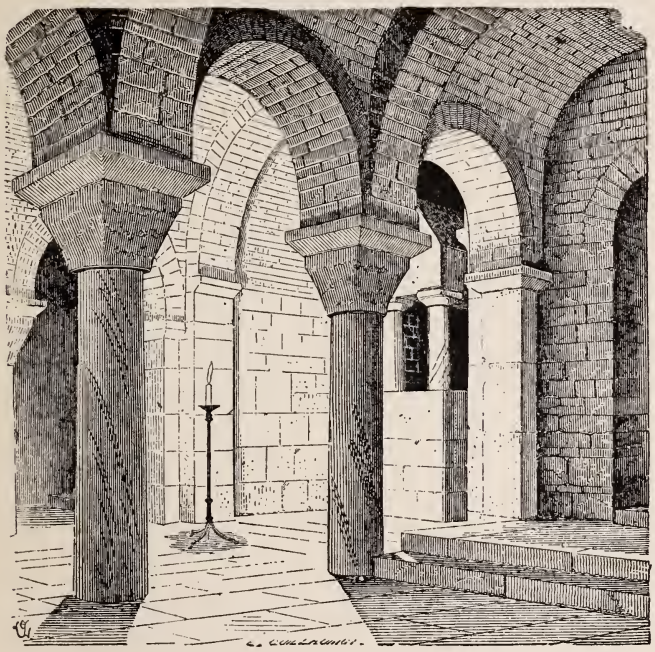
steps. Within the crypt, towards the east, was an altar, which held within it the head of the blessed Fursaeus. (This was a celebrated Irish missionary, who preached with great success among the East Angles in the first half of the seventh century.) Enclosed within the curved portion of the crypt extended westward a single passage-way leading to the resting-place of the blessed Dunstan (Archbishop of Canterbury, who died in A.D. 988), which was separated from the crypt itself by a strong mass of masonry; for that most holy father lay buried at a great depth before the aforesaid steps, and a large and lofty tomb of pyramidal form was erected above him, having at the head of the saint the matutinal altar."

Curiously enough, the fashion, so universal in early times in the churches of the West, and which was largely followed in the great revival of the eleventh century, of constructing these elaborate subterranean churches, entirely went out towards the end of the twelfth century. Even in the more important abbeys they no longer appear. The reason for this great change in the plans of churches, no doubt, was the practice, which soon became general, of bringing up the hallowed chests or coffins, which contained the remains of famous saints, from the tomb in the crypt, and of placing them in reliquaries above ground, behind one or other of the altars in the choir. These reliquaries were of considerable size and often of extraordinary richness, and were plainly visible as they towered high above the altar. The earliest instance of this removal of the bodies of the saints from the crypt to the church above ground is perhaps in the abbey of S. Denys, near Paris, where this bringing up bodies of the holy dead was carried out by Abbot Suger, the famous

minister of Louis VII., King of France, in the first half of the twelfth century. Suger brought up the bodies of S. Dionysius (S. Denys), the Areopagite, S. Rusticus, and S. Eleutherius, enshrining them in great magnificence behind the high altar in the church above. This practice soon became very general in the cases of churches which possessed such hallowed relics, and the fashion of constructing crypts beneath churches completely went out, and with very few exceptions no crypt was introduced into any of the churches built after the last half of the twelfth century. The new custom which placed the remains of the saint in the conspicuous and often gorgeous reliquary on high behind the altar, where the worshippers could see the shrine, completely destroyed the old *raison d'être* of the crypt, and thus effectually extinguished the sentiment and tradition of earlier days which demanded the presence of a crypt of large or small dimensions, even though the church was not the fortunate possessor of the relics of any renowned and specially revered saint.

The general plan of the more important of these subterranean churches is much the same, and will be described when we speak of the crypt of Gloucester. The most notable English crypts are at Canterbury, York, Winchester, Gloucester, and Worcester. In France, the crypts of S. Benignus at Dijon, and in the cathedral of Chartres, are perhaps the vastest in size. That of Vézelay (Yonne) is specially interesting, as it contained traditionally the sepulchre of S. Mary Magdalene, and still preserves the remains of a very ancient crypt. That of S. Eutropius at Saintes (Charente Inférieure) is of great magnificence and of large size. S. Avitus of Orléans boasts one of the most ancient of existing crypts. It cer-

tainly dates from before the ninth century. In Germany, Spires possesses a famous crypt. At Bamberg and at Strasburg there are two crypts. In some of these curious subterranean churches there are wells, the waters



Crypt of S. Seurin.

of which in certain instances were supposed to contain healing powers.

In the enormous crypt beneath the cathedral of Chartres, the most ancient parts of which date back to the fourth century, there was an ancient well (*Puit des*

Saints Forts) into which tradition says the bodies of S. Modeste and other martyrs were cast in the first ages of Christianity; but the well in question has been built over, and the exact situation of this sacred spot is now uncertain.[1]

The following vivid picture of a service still held in one of the most ancient of these strange subterranean churches at Chartres, still used for worship, has been lately given by a French writer. "The centre aisle, forming a low nave, had chairs on either side, leaving a narrow space to give access to the altar. It was scarcely possible to see. The sanctuary was lighted only by tiny lamps from the roof, in little saucers of lurid orange or dull gold. An extraordinary mild atmosphere prevailed in this underground structure, which was also full of a singular perfume, in which a musty odour of hot wax mingled with a suggestion of damp earth. But this was only the background, the canvas, so to speak, of the perfume, and was lost under the embroidery of fragrance which covered it, the faded gold, as it were, of oil in which long-kept aromatic herbs had been steeped, and old incense powder dissolved. It was a weird and mysterious vapour, as strange as the crypt itself, which with its furtive lights and breadths of shades, was at once penitential and soothing. . . . The tiny transept had its little altar with a Greek cross in relief against a purple disk. Overhead the enormous curve of the

[1] See generally on the special architectural features of the crypts above noticed, and on the subject generally, *Quicherat* ("Mélanges Archéoliques, &c."), *De Caumont* ("Abécédaire de l'Architecture Réligeuse"), *Corroyer* ("Architecture Romaine"), *Viollet-le-Duc* ("Dictionnaire de l'Architecture," s.v. Crypte, &c."), *A. Clerval* ("Chartres"), and the essay on English church architecture by *G. G. Scott* (1881).

vaulting hung heavy, and so low that a man could touch it by stretching out an arm. It was as black as the mouth of a chimney, and scorched by the fires that in past days had consumed the successive cathedrals built above it. . . . A sacristan came in and lighted the tapers on the high altar; then strings of silver-gilt hearts became visible in the semicircle all along the walls, reflecting the blaze of flames, and forming a glory for a statue of the Virgin sitting stiff and dark, with a Child on her knees. This was the famous Virgin of the Cavern, *Nôtre Dame de sous terre* of Chartres. . . . In this atmosphere of prayer, crushed in by the heavy roof," the writer tells us how, "in the midst of kneeling Sisters of Mercy and other worshippers, he was struck with a sense of some early Christian rite buried in the catacombs. Here were the same ecstatic tenderness, the same faith; and it was possible to imagine some apprehension of surprise, and some eagerness to profess the faith in the face of danger. And thus in a vague image, the sacred cellar held the dim picture of the neophytes assembled so long since in the underground caverns of Rome."[1]

Very different indeed to the Chartres crypt is the appearance of the subterranean church at Gloucester. Whereas at Chartres, it has never, or at all events only during a brief period in the revolutionary years at the close of the eighteenth century, ceased to be used as a favourite and revered place of worship; here at Gloucester for some three centuries and a half it has been utterly disused. The great English crypt presents a forlorn, almost a ruined, appearance. The altars are gone, the side chapels defaced, the massive walls are discoloured, the pavement is rough and uneven, no trace of the

[1] Huysman's "La Cathédrale."

ancient colour and gold which once adorned it remains; only in quite late years have the custodians of the cathedral at Gloucester paid any attention at all to this precious relic of Aldred and Serlo, the Saxon and Norman builders of the eleventh century; and their care has been simply confined to the few necessary repairs to the masonry, which, however, was too solid and massive to require much attention. Perhaps the antiquary may rejoice at this neglect, as nothing has been done in the past 350 years which can interfere with his observation of the ancient details, indeed they are more easily studied than would have been possible in the early years of the sixteenth century when the Benedictine dwellers in Gloucester were ejected, for everything which veiled the old masonry has been long removed. But the reverent worshipper is naturally dismayed and shocked when he wanders through this ancient, deserted, and, alas! desecrated sanctuary.

But, as we said, the present state of the Gloucester crypt is everything that the curious antiquary could desire; unhindered by any attempt at restoration, or by any furniture or decoration, he can at his leisure examine the original masonry of the different builders, now bare and stripped, and draw his conclusions as to the dates of this, for the most part, most ancient work.

The arrangement of this subterranean church follows pretty closely the ordinary arrangement of the other more important crypts on the continent and in England. It extends underneath the choir overhead, the aisles surrounding the choir, and the small projecting chapels. "Its outer walls are about 10 feet thick, and the aisle floor is on an average 8 feet below the level of the soil on the outside of the building. The centre part is divided by

Gloucester Cathedral: the Crypt.

two rows of small columns, irregularly placed, from which spring arches carrying the floor of the choir above. In design these small columns in the centre of the crypt vary greatly as to their capitals, abaci, and bases, all of which are strikingly different from the half-columns with cushion capitals attached to the outer walls, on which rest the ribs they mutually carry. So different are these two rows of columns of the central part as to make it very questionable if by far the larger portion of these little pillars does not belong to a yet earlier church."[1] As regards the enormously thick semicircular columns in the ambulatory which encircles the inner portion of the crpyt, although of great antiquity, and of early Norman work, they do not belong to the original structure, but they are really casings built round and enclosing the earlier and smaller piers, and the ribs springing from their capitals are built *under* as with a view to support the earlier vaulting. There are at the east end two large piers of Perpendical work, no doubt whatever erected in the fourteenth century to carry the increased weight overhead of the choir, which was carried up to a much greater height in the restoration and alteration of the abbey in the days of Edward III.

Thus in the Gloucester crypt we find work apparently of four distinct dates. The massive piers at the east end are unmistakably of the middle of the fourteenth century, and are clearly "Perpendicular" in style; and the reason of their being placed in the position in which we find them is clear—the great weight of the raised choir of the builders of Edward III.'s time rendered necessary additional foundation works, and these piers were then

[1] F. S. Waller (resident architect of the cathedral), "Notes and Sketches."

erected for the purpose. They did their work well, for they have sufficed to carry the additional weight of the changed choir, and though five centuries and a half have elapsed since they were erected, no sign of subsidence or any other mischief has anywhere appeared. The great, round half-columns, with the cushion capitals, in the ambulatory which encircles the inner portion of the crypt, are without doubt the work of Serlo, at the close of the eleventh century. The date of the smaller piers round which they are built is uncertain; not improbably they formed part of Aldred's church, completed in 1048 or 1058. We pass to the inner division of the crypt. Here the little double row of columns belong without doubt to an earlier date than any of Serlo's work. That they represent a part of Aldred's work is highly probable; but it is a question whether they do not represent a yet earlier school of builders even than Aldred's; in which case, when Aldred rebuilt the church in the days of Edward the Confessor, he re-used these pillars belonging to the older church which he replaced. These pillars have been dated by some experts as not much later than the year 1000, possibly even earlier. Some years before Aldred's restoration, the records tell us that in A.D. 1022 King Canute made a great change in the abbey of Gloucester, and replaced the secular priests, introduced by Beornwulf, King of Mercia in A.D. 823, by Benedictine monks. Building work may have been carried on when this great change of Canute was effected, but we possess no account of it. On the whole, it seems safer to ascribe this part of the crypt to Aldred, although the little columns in question seem to suggest an older date.

Radiating from the ambulatory which encircles the

inner portion are five chapels. Most of the work in these is of the time of Serlo (close of the eleventh century), but they contain the ruined remains of Sedilia, altars, Piscinæ, &c., generally of early date, but subsequent to Serlo. One of them, on the north side, was beautifully vaulted and decorated as late as the latter part of the thirteenth century.

There are, as we have remarked, no remains of any shrine or tomb of any special saint or holy man in the Gloucester crypt, nor in the monkish records or in the "Memoriale" is there any tradition of such an interment. This crypt is an example of the "sentiment" or "fashion" which in not a few instances suggested, in very early times, the building of these vast subterranean churches, even where there was no tradition of a tomb of martyr or saint. The ancient practice during the second and third centuries, of the worship of the early Christians in the Roman catacombs, no doubt contributed to this "sentiment."

In the sad and melancholy underground church, which sleeps its death-sleep beneath the glorious Gloucester minster, with its low-browed arches, its massive, heavy pillars, its curious brown and pallid tints, its ruined altars, here and there its scarred and broken tracery, there is a strange pathos, a something which goes home to many hearts; it tells the story of a long-forgotten life of superstition it may have been, but still of an earnest, prayer-filled life in the midst of a rude and war-filled age; it seems to tell of men, world-weary, sin-weary, who had crept in here to pray and to meditate during the few months, perhaps years, still left of a life spent in very different scenes from the crypt and cloisters of the abbey church, and there to die on the ashes-strewn floor

of a cell of the infirmary hard by—not sorrowfully, not gladly, perhaps, but still trustfully, with hope in their hearts, with even more than hope, with confidence—feeling that beneath them were the everlasting arms. Here in this crypt, no doubt, had knelt many a Norman baron who had put on the Benedictine cowl; many a man-at-arms who had fought under the Plantagenet banner on stricken fields—men who had sinned deeply in their day, and in an agony of sorrow and remorse had sought peace in the great Gloucester house of prayer, and probably had found it. The memories of unnumbered prayers are thick in this solemn, deserted crypt. The gorgeous choir above, with its wealth of colour and gilding, with its carved stalls, its vast translucent window, its wondrous roof—all tell still of service of song and prayer, but of song and prayer unbroken for eight long centuries—service of prayer paid to God and His Christ, changed, adapted to successive generations, but unbroken, ever ascending, incense-like, to God's Throne. But in the deserted and solitary crypt all this is but a memory.

CHAPTER XIII

THE NAVE OF GLOUCESTER: ITS ARCHITECTURE AND PROBABLE SCHEME OF COLOUR DECORATION

There is no doubt about the date of the Gloucester nave. It was undoubtedly the work of Serlo, the first Norman abbot. The period spent in building this part at least of the massive and mighty church is usually given as about eleven years, from A.D. 1089 to 1100, in which year we read of a solemn consecration by Bishop Wulstan of Worcester, who preached on that occasion a famous sermon on peace. Serlo was a good example of the higher ecclesiastics of his time. He was one of the new school of earnest and devoted prelates, a man we read "humble to the good, menacing and terrible to the proud." An able organiser, trained in the stern school of the monastics of the second half of the eleventh century, devoted and earnest, he had attracted the notice of the Conqueror and Lanfranc, and on the recommendation of Osmund, the chancellor, in A.D. 1072, was appointed abbot of Gloucester on the death of Abbot Wulfstan, who had gone on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and died there.

We know little of Serlo's earlier career beyond the fact that he had been once a secular priest, a canon of Avranches. Then, desirous of leading a more austere life, he became a monk at S. Michael's Mount, and eventually a chaplain of William the Conqueror.

Gloucester Abbey and Monastery possessed a great

name and a far-reaching tradition. It was specially important owing to the city which clustered under the shadow of the religious house, which had long been a favourite royal residence. The Confessor often dwelt in Gloucester. Athelstan had died there. The "Gemots," or public assemblies or Parliaments held at Gloucester under the presidency of the sovereigns during the tenth and eleventh centuries, were numerous.

The Conqueror when in England loved to spend his Christmas feast in Gloucester. It shared with Winchester and Westminster the position of a royal city.

But as an ecclesiastical foundation, when the Normans ruled in England, whatever it once had been, it was in a state of decay. Perhaps the Norman chronicler exaggerates this fallen state of the religious house when he tells us how at Serlo's advent only three monks and some six boys remained in the once famous monastery. Be this as it may, under Serlo the Norman monk, and with the help and protection of William and Matilda, the little company rapidly grew, and Serlo, before he passed away ruled over a hundred monks, and to these must be added a crowd of servants, officials, and novices, who made up the company of an important Benedictine house of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Serlo undoubtedly raised the Gloucester monastery to the position of one of the most famous monastic establishments of the land, a position it maintained until the day of the dissolution in 1540, some four and a half centuries later.

The Norman monk, besides his other qualifications, was emphatically a great builder. His work here at Gloucester ranks with that of Gundulf at Rochester, Herbert of Losinga of Norwich, William of S. Carilef, and Flambard of Durham. It is doubtful whether or no he designed, or

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

Nave Pillars from the West

merely completed, the east limb of the great abbey, but the nave, with its amazing pillars and massive arches, which, with Tewkesbury Abbey, stands alone in these particulars, was certainly the work and thought of Serlo and his architect.

This is how the Guide Books describe it: "The nave, as it is, 174 feet long by 34¼ feet, 67 feet 7 inches high, is quite unique. The unique feature is the great height of the massive circular columns, fourteen in number, and the consequently somewhat dwarfed triforium or gallery running over the main arches. The original Norman clerestory and the flat wooden roof of Serlo is gone, and the present vaulted roof was the work of the monks in A.D. 1242, when a fire had destroyed the wooden roof. The effects of this fire are still visible in the vivid red colour of the lower parts of the huge columns, stained by the burning rafters fallen from the roof. Serlo had vaulted the aisles, but the skill of the early Romanesque builders of his day was not equal to the vaulting of so large a space as the nave. His vaulting still remains, however, in the north aisle."

The fourteen pillars are 30 feet 7 inches in height, about twice the height of those at Norwich. The Norman piers have round unadorned capitals. A cable moulding runs along just above the arches. The west end of the nave, for some unknown reason, probably on account of the falling of the western towers, was reconstructed by Abbot Morwent, A.D. 1421–27, in the style known as the Perpendicular.

The general aspect of this nave, grand and massive though it be, is cold, not beautiful, but impressive and solemn. At night, when lit up and filled with worshippers, the cold, dead character disappears, and it

presents an appearance of rare and peculiar beauty. But viewed in daylight, it lacks something. It was not thus that Serlo left it, not thus that the great mediæval abbots who followed Serlo were accustomed to see the nave of their glorious abbey. From the end of the eleventh century down to the suppression of the Benedictine house in 1540 the now cold white nave glowed with colour and with gold; nor is this mere surmise. Very carefully have the traces of the vanished glory been searched out, with this result.[1] "Although," writes one who, from long years of scholarly observation, is singularly competent to speak here, "painting and gilding were no doubt largely employed to ornament the ribs and bosses of the vaulting, the capitals of the columns, the various mouldings, the plain surfaces of the walls, the monumental effigies, &c., yet comparatively few traces remain. This is chiefly owing to this mode of enrichment having been obliterated by whitewash, which can hardly be removed without injury to the colour beneath. . . . During the repairs of the nave (1856), painting was discovered on the vaulting. [He is speaking of the work done in A.D. 1242, after the fire had destroyed the original wooden roof of Serlo, which, without doubt, was coloured and gilded.] The vaulting shafts are of marble, and the capitals, corbels, bosses, and mouldings were formerly

[1] This accurate description of the remains of colour and gold is chiefly quoted from the notes of Mr. F. S. Waller, who for some forty years or more has been the resident architect of the Cathedral, assisted at his own request from time to time by Sir Gilbert Scott and Mr. Pearson.

It may be as well to state that at the present time and for many years past the most conservative treatment of all the old fabric has been adopted, defective portions, whether of wood or stone, have been, and are now, simply repaired but never renewed, unless they have become untrustworthy and dangerous.

painted. The painting may be thus described. The hollow of the abacus of the capitals red, the lower members of the same green, the whole of the bell red, the leaves alternately green and yellow, with the stalks running down of the same colour with the red bell of the capital, the vertical moulding between the marble shafts red and blue alternately, the lower shafts green and blue, with red in the hollows. The foliage on these also is green and yellow. Some of the horizontal mouldings are partly coloured also. The bosses in the groining are yellow and green, as in the capitals. All the colouring, which was very rich, was effected with water-colours. In one instance only has any gold been discovered, and that upon one of the bosses in the roof, other gold work having quite disappeared."

"Traces of painting were found on the large columns. A diapering of red stars can still be detected on the second pier from the east, on the north side of the nave. On the upper part of the west side of the corresponding column on the south were indications of a light canopy of wood or stone fastened to the face of the pier, the whole surrounded by painting, divided at intervals by bands enriched with fleur-de-lis and emblems of the Trinity, and the interspaces draped with the letters I.H.S. and M with crowns over them.

"Over the west door, opening into the cloister from the north aisle of the nave, are traces of twelve saints painted in the stone panels. The five crockets of the arch over the door were certainly gilded. On the main ribs of Serlo's original vaulting in this aisle many stars, ornamented crosses, &c., and dark colouring in the hollows of the diagonal ribs remain."

Although we are here dwelling on "the nave," it will

be worth while, as we are especially dealing with the question of mediæval colouring, briefly to quote the results of the observations of this careful and accurate "master of the works" of our day and time on "colour" remains in other parts of our cathedral. "On the south wall of the chapel (S. Andrew's), east of the south transept, traces of a figure in slight relief were lately found. Around were painted figures of angels and scrolls. The next chapel to the east had the walls painted with roses, separated by horizontal stripes, both of a red colour. The vault, walls, and windows of the north chapel, in the triporium over Boteler's chapel, are still covered with painting, chiefly scroll work, of a red colour, and of the fourteenth century. The panelling at the back of the seditia of the choir, prior to its restoration, exhibited the remains of red colour in its forty-eight small compartments. The bosses in the vaulting at the east end of the choir were coloured red and blue. Traces of red and other colours are discernible on the columns of the ambulatory of the choir. On the *wooden* panelling of the chapel of S. John the Baptist, in the south transept, at the back of the choir-stalls, are painted in diagonal rows the initials of the saint, S. in blue and J. B. in red, under crowns. The reredos in this chapel, once ornamented with painting, is still left, though much defaced and broken.

The niches and shafts between the windows in the Lady Chapel still show plain indications of colour. But the reredos exhibits the finest remains of this kind of "decoration in the Cathedral. On account of its having been sadly defaced in the Reformation, or more probably in the great Rebellion, it was covered up by Bishop Benson (in the eighteenth century) with a plain stucco front with rays, clouds, and cherubs painted on it. This

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

The North Aisle from the Ambulatory

was removed in the year 1811, when the delicate and elaborate tabernacle work covered with gilding and oil colours was brought to light. The prevailing backgrounds of the statues (all lost) are red, but some of the vertical mouldings are in blue. The three principal niches have gilt diaperings of foliage, cinquefoils, &c. Other portions have suns or stars, the dividing shafts have twisted bands with intersecting lines enclosing fleur-de-lis most delicately drawn and gilded. Other remains of painting and gilding will be found on the monumental effigies, especially that of Abbot Parker (or Malverne sixteenth century), in places most protected from injury." Even in the curious, little seen, inconspicuous cloister passage, adorned with very early Norman arcading of the eleventh century, leading from the east walk of the cloisters into the garden, show, in the arcades towards the eastern end of the "way," clear traces of very ancient wall painting.

Such an accurate and patient summary of the remains of colour and gilding in a great Romanesque abbey compiled from observations stretching over many years, leads to the calm and deliberate conclusion that certainly from the end of the eleventh century to well-nigh the middle of the sixteenth century, our fathers, who designed, built, altered, as their various schools of architecture came into fashion, the mighty mediæval churches, very largely used colour and gold as a means of ornamentation in *every part of the building*. Very little of a great Benedictine abbey indeed seems to have been *uncoloured*. Our present taste —some would say want of taste—may severely condemn this love of colour, but the fact is there, and in all studies and descriptions of these inimitable works of our "fathers" this general use of colour deserves a far more careful and sympathetic consideration than this great

feature in the mediæval abbeys and churches is in the habit of receiving. It is too often slurred over, forgotten, ignored. *After* 450 years—many of them years of utter neglect and carelessness—*after* several raids of iconoclasts, of men often earnest and devoted, it is true, but who hated the soft, brilliant loveliness of these decorations of the mediæval artist as tending to superstitious reverence—*after* many coats of destructive and hateful whitewash plastered over tomb and altar, over wall and roof, over pillar and arch, still the patient investigator finds well-nigh everywhere the dim lines of the old fair colour, and the tarnished, almost obliterated remains of gold. He finds it (this colouring) in every portion of this scarred grey abbey, some of it laid on by the men of Abbot Serlo, William the Conqueror's chaplain; some of it, the handiwork of Abbot Thokey, the friend of the hapless Plantagenet Edward II., and of his successor, Wigmore, the founder of the Perpendicular School; some of it owing to the loving care of the last abbots who bore rule in the storied Benedictine house, just before the crash came, when Henry VIII. was king.

The colours lay once, some would say, in the form of a barbaric adornment on the huge cylindrical pillars of the Romanesque nave, and on the mighty piers of the old Norman or Norman-Saxon choir-ambulatory, they gleamed and shone on the early attempts of timid vaulting in the aisles. They were laid on in a picturesque confusion of beauty over the elaborate work in the early English clerestory, and a little later over the daring vaulting of the nave.[1] And the taste for colour grew as time

[1] G. S. Scott, in his essay on "English Church Architecture," thus writes of S. Albans Abbey, the first in rank among abbeys, built by Paul, an ambitious monk of S. Stephen's, at Caen, a re-

went on. The gorgeous vaulting of the soaring choir was aflame with colour and with gold. The Lady Chapel, probably never finished, was once, as far as we can judge, splendid with coloured devices, and if, as some think, the colour ended where the great glass wall begins in that delicate and matchless Mary Chapel, the white walls of the upper portion of the Lady Chapel were left simply as a silver setting to the beautiful stained-glass windows, the great feature of the Lady Chapel,

lation of Lanfranc, A.D. 1077: "Plain as is the internal architecture of this enormous pile, the arches being perfectly square, though of several orders . . . nevertheless, the effect aimed at was, in relief, one of great refinement. . . . The whole was decorated in colour. Of this system of coloured enrichment sufficient remains to enable us to form a fair notion of what the complete effect must have been. . . . Almost every portion of this fine work—[Mr. Scott is speaking of the north side of the nave of the noble church where the original Norman design remains unaltered; the words were written in 1881]—shows remains of a coloured decoration. Against each pier stood an altar; over each of these nave altars is painted a crucifixion, having below it a *predella* of smaller subjects which have reference to the dedication of this particular altar. . . . These paintings range from the work of the original builders down to the early part of the thirteenth century, but they are all treated on the same simple system, and produce both as to colour and treatment a perfectly harmonious whole." Our writer went on to say how "Every ancient edifice, whether of Egyptian, Greek, Roman, or Mediæval times, was carefully faced internally with wrought stone, or with plaster, and decorated throughout in colour, or it might be encrusted with marble and mosaic. The notion of leaving the interior of a building as rough and rugged as an exterior generally must be, has been from a very early date abandoned by civilised man. . . . A Norman interior so treated (*i.e.* restored upon the principle of a spurious truthfulness, its painted decorations, its enriched plaster-work *all* removed, and the naked brickwork carefully pointed in coloured mortar), serves to illustrate the barbarism, not of the eleventh century, but of the nineteenth."

Nor in matters of coloured decoration did the great mediæval architects by any means propose to confine themselves to the *interiors* of their noble erections. Viollet-le-Duc dwells eloquently on the splendid

through which the light came in soft waves of ruby red and sapphire blue. There was scarcely any white glass apparently, not even pearly grisaille, as far as we can see, in this typical Benedictine abbey of the green Severn lands. The windows were all richly stained, but save in the famous East window of the Choir and in the great East window of the Mary Chapel, with its beautiful patchwork tapestry made up of fragments from many an ancient broken window, the old stained glass has to a great extent disappeared. Still enough brilliant

effect of a judicious use of colour and of gold on parts even of the *exterior* of a mighty abbey. He takes as his example the Cathedral of Nôtre Dame at Paris, erected between A.D. 1140 or 1160 and A.D. 1235, being commenced at that early period when Romanesque was giving place everywhere to Gothic forms. The exterior of the great west front of that noble House of God of Nôtre Dame, once glowed with colour. The three grey portals were richly adorned. Above the portals, the famous gallery of kings was all ablaze with colour and gold, and the stone tracing of the vast rose window, higher still, gleamed too with rich gilding.

Bitterly lamenting the cold and monotonous taste of later times, he asks, "Pourquoi nous privons-nous de toutes ces ressources fournies par l'art." From the sixteenth century, however, onwards, all attempts at colour in the exterior of this glorious building had apparently ceased.

It is, of course, nowhere even suggested in these remarks that colour adornment was *universal* or even *common* on the *exterior* walls of an abbey, or on any portion of them, at any period of the Middle Ages; probably reasons for economy which were ever carefully weighed would stand in the way of such a costly and perishable ornamentation. It is only asserted that such adornment was regarded as a high ideal, seldom, perhaps, carried out save in such buildings as in the great Paris Cathedral.

Very few, if any, remains of this beautiful *exterior* coloured work anywhere remain to us. The rays of the sun, the rains and winds of five or six hundred summers and winters, the unreasoning fury of the iconoclast, the too skilfully used tools of the restorer have effectually done their work. And what our "fathers" have worked in this particular has disappeared, and only lives in a few rare fragmentary remains, and in the few detailed records of their labours which have chanced to come down to us.

fragments, plentifully dotted about, in the many windows remain to tell us the story of the glass artist of the past. Once, it is certain, our cathedral of Gloucester—Nave and Aisles, Choir and Transepts, the broad Ambulatories and the stately Lady Chapel, like the glorious cathedral of Chartres now, received its light through the medium of jewelled glass of the painters of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries.

CHAPTER XIV

THE NAVE: WHENCE CAME THE MEDIÆVAL PASSION FOR COLOUR?

WHENCE now came this great passion for colour? As the churches and abbeys were multiplied in the great awakening of the eleventh century, and became ever larger, grander, more stately, as the century drew to an end, this love of colour seems gradually to have seized upon men. Wall-painting of these far-back ages has faded and indeed well-nigh disappeared, but the coloured glass fragments that remains tell us of the progress which was made in the art men had come to love. The matchless windows at the west end of Chartres, dating from the first half of the twelfth century, are silent but eloquent witnesses of the skilful glass colourists who lived in the half-century which followed the Conqueror's death, and the colouring of the glass of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, be it remembered, has never been surpassed and scarcely ever equalled. These dates give us a clue to the answer to our question—*whence* came this taste, this passion for colour—was it not from the East? The thousands of crusaders, including in their ranks many monks and ecclesiastics, brought back the taste for rich and varied colouring, and developed it as years went on. The date of the great mediæval love for colour exactly coincides with the era of those strange Eastern wars which

began to absorb men's hearts at the close of the eleventh century, and which preserved their curious attraction all through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The *first* crusade, with its enormous host under Godfrey de Bouillon and Robert of Normandy was in A.D. 1095. The *second*, excited by the preaching of Bernard of Clairvaux, bears the date of A.D. 1147. The *third*, in which Richard Cœur-de-Lion was the heroic figure, was in A.D. 1191, while the *eighth* crusade, in which the saint king, Louis IX. of France, fought and died, is dated A.D. 1270.[1] The glory of colouring, as far as we can judge from the glass-painters who worked in such piles as the cathedrals of Chartres and Bourges, had reached by this time its highest development.

But while the love of gorgeous and harmonious colouring was with little doubt a heritage of the crusaders drawn from their Eastern experience, the symbolism and figure-drawing was of course purely a Western and Christian development. No one, however, can look on the magnificent "Rose" windows of Chartres and Amiens and Nôtre Dame of Paris as in the various and changing lights of morning, mid-day, and afternoon they gleam and glitter in their splendour of harmonious colouring, a very confusion of crushed gems, without being reminded of the exquisite beauty of an oriental embroidery. The source of the inspiration of the great

[1] The same idea is touched upon in the remarkable work on Chartres Cathedral by Huysman, who writes of the Chartres twelfth and thirteenth century glass thus: "The borders in their design and arrangements of their colours were an evident reminiscence of the Persian carpets, which undoubtedly served as models to the painters;" again, speaking of Nôtre Dame de Chartres as she was presented by the glass-painters, "She sat enthroned in a heaven of ultramarine, surrounded by these oriental hangings of glass—a pathetic reminder of the Crusades."—*La Cathédrale*, chap. vi.

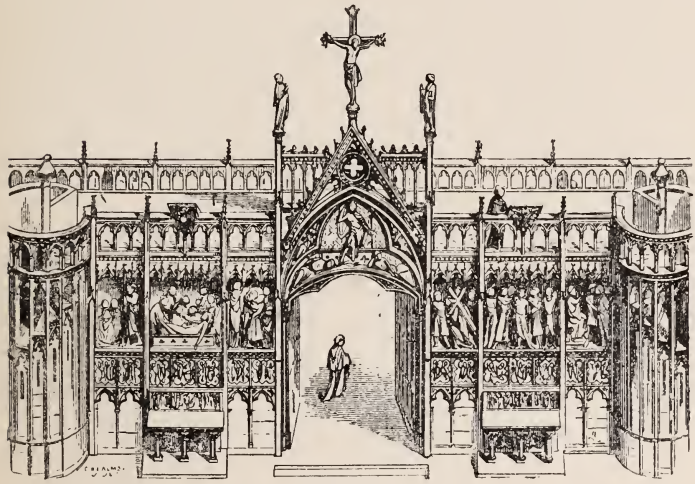
colour artists of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is unmistakable.

In our dream of the past of this grand abbey church of Gloucester we have in our little study restored the colour to the walls and columns, to the old flat wooden roof above—a happier feature than the vaulted Gothic roof (also in its turn adorned with colour) which replaced it in the latter years of the twelfth century. We have replaced the colour in the clerestory beautiful work and in the aisle vaulting. We have filled the nave windows alike in aisles and clerestory, with the older and fairer glass with which the craft of mediæval glass-painters adorned a Benedictine abbey like that of Gloucester. And thus we see the mighty nave, as it appeared to the worshippers in the twelfth and following centuries, no longer, as in our day, cold and death-like. We see it somewhat gloomy, perhaps even sombre, for the stained windows were but small when the vast size of the interior is taken into account—but the general effect, lit up as was the church by day and night, with many lights on the numerous altars, must have been indescribably rich and solemn.[1]

Let us dwell with a little more detail upon this

[1] Of course in such a broad generalisation as is contained in the foregoing and following passages no *special* date of the mediæval period is alluded to. The ornamentation by colour began doubtless with Serlo, and was gradually continued and developed through a long series of years. Altars, too, through public and private benefactions, were multiplied as time went on. Of the stained glass-work, so marked a feature in churches from the middle of the twelfth century onwards, we have no remains at Gloucester of an earlier date than the first years of the fourteenth century, and very little of that. There may have been, probably was, reasoning from other examples, much of an earlier period, but it has perished in the various periods of stress and storm through which the abbey has passed.

interior of the nave. It was, like all important mediæval churches, furnished with many altars. Entering the church at the west end, the first object which would have attracted the eye of the pilgrim or the wayfarer would have been the great crucifix or rood which towered above the screen between the nave and the choir, in the same place probably where now stands the screen sur-



A Mediæval Screen (Paris).

mounted by the organ. The screen in question is placed across the western arch of the Central Tower. Over the screen was a loft (pulpitum), which had in the midst, upon the side towards the nave, the altar of the Holy Cross. Above the loft or pulpitum was the huge beam which sustained the great crucifix. On this beam very often were the figures of S. John and S. Mary, and sometimes

two cherubim. Generally a stone pulpit commanding the nave stood also on the loft below the beam supporting the crucifix.[1]

We have no tradition to tell us what the original Norman screen was like, but in the course of the fourteenth century we read in the Gloucester Abbey records that Abbot Wygmore, A.D. 1329–1337, of whom we shall say more when we come to speak of the south transept and choir, erected a new rood-loft and crucifix and screen, which a little later was elaborately decorated with tabernacle work and statues by Abbot Horton, A.D. 1351–1377. Wygmore lies buried on the southern side of this screen.

The screen was pierced then as now by a door leading into the choir, and in front of the door was an altar, commonly called the people's altar. It is probable that in Gloucester there were two altars, one on either side the door leading to the choir. In the cathedral church of Durham—that most curious treatise called the "Rites of Durham," with its detailed picture of the great abbey in the period immediately preceding the dissolution of the monasteries (A.D. 1540)—the people's altar beneath the rood screen was termed the "Jesus" altar. In some abbeys it is termed the altar of the Holy Cross.

Proceeding down the nave of Gloucester—there were various other altars of which now every vestige has dis-

[1] "There are many ancient rood-screens and rood-lofts to be found in every part of the country, but there is not, I believe, a single old English rood standing. The systematic destruction of these striking symbols of Christian belief by the English Reformers is the more remarkable from the marked absence of any such animosity in Germany, the country which gave birth to Protestantism. Even to this day in the land of Luther, no such feeling as led to the wholesale destruction of roods in England is to be found."—G. G. Scott's "Essay on History of Church Architecture," p. 199.

appeared—the names of some of those to whom the altars were dedicated is preserved, such as S. Edmund (Edmund Rich, archbishop of Canterbury), S. Edward the Confessor. Others were dedicated to the twelve apostles, to S. Thomas Becket, &c. The position of these, however, is uncertain. If the plan of the abbey of S. Albans, which was built about the same period as Gloucester, was followed, at the foot of each of the great piers or columns an altar would have been placed, and this seems in early days to have been a very general English custom. In Germany and elsewhere these nave altars were often arranged in the midst of the aisles, as in the well-known plan of the abbey of S. Gall. But such an arrangement would materially have interfered with the crowds who in the latter part of the eleventh century began to throng the naves of the more important abbeys in the midst or in the immediate neighbourhood of a large city. The French habit was to form distinct chapels each with their altar between the buttresses of the aisles. The lights which were continually burning upon these many altars would help to light the somewhat dim and dark building. In the midst of the nave of Lanfranc at Canterbury was suspended a gilded corona or chandelier. Something of this kind might have been in use in Gloucester. For the night services most probably every monk brought with him a little lamp. This is still the case in the Grande Chartreuse and in other Carthusian Houses, where the night service is a prolonged office, lasting sometimes two or more hours. The fires which so frequently occurred in Gloucester Abbey probably were owing, on more than one occasion, to carelessness on the part of the monks, sleepy and tired in the course of these night services.

The general aspect of the nave of Gloucester, with its vast piers, its elaborate adornment with colour and gold, its statuary, all now destroyed, its many dim-lit altars —for the lights were kept burning by day as by night —must have been indescribably solemn and expressive, and it served a great purpose. It was as we have remarked, no *mere fashion* introduced by the Norman delighting in huge buildings which prompted the erection of such a mighty nave as the one we are endeavouring to describe. The great abbey, erected in the main by the Norman Serlo, served a twofold purpose. It was the church of the large Benedictine community gathered under Serlo's rule. This community numbered, we read, before his death as many as a hundred monks, without counting the numerous lay brothers and dependants. From two to three hundred at least would assemble in that church, in the portion set apart for their worship at the "seven" day or night services.

It served, too, as the church of the people for as many in the ancient Gloucester city at the gates of the monastery and its neighbourhood who chose to worship in the abbey church. To the citizens must be added a constant stream, now large, now small, of strangers—travellers, merchants, pilgrims—to whom a Benedictine abbey was ever open.

This frequenting, on the part of the people of various classes and orders, of the abbeys and churches, had largely increased in the course of the great awakening of religion which had taken place in the West universally in this eleventh century. A curious contemporary reference to the crowds who were in the habit of thronging the nave of Gloucester appears in the account of what took place on the festival of S. Peter ad Vincula, August 1, Lammas day, A.D. 1100, the day which

preceded the death of King William Rufus through the accidental (was it an accident?) shooting of an arrow by Walter Tyrrell, when the King was hunting in the New Forest.[1] Immense crowds of people of all ranks were assembled together (in the abbey of Gloucester Monastery), when Fulchered, formerly a monk of Seez and first abbot of Shrewsbury, an eloquent expositor of the Holy Scriptures, being chosen preacher as one of the oldest clergy, ascended the pulpit and addressed a sermon to the people in the course of which he is reported to have denounced, though not by name, the wickedness of William Rufus. His words spoken on that occasion suggest that he was aware of the plot which ended in the New Forest tragedy on the following day. The words of Abbot Fulchered spoken to "the crowds" in the nave of Gloucester on this occasion are certainly remarkable. "The anger of the Lord will no longer spare transgressors. . . . The *bow* of divine wrath is bent against the reprobate, and the *swift arrow* is taken from *the quiver* to inflict wounds."

[1] The story is told by *Ordericus Vitalis*, born A.D. 1075, a monk of S. Evroult, in Normandy, author of a well-known general ecclesiastical history. From the epoch of the Norman Conquest down to 1141 his history is extremely valuable. See Mr. Hart's introduction to the *Historia et Cartularium* (Gloucester), vol. i. (series of the Master of the Rolls), where the episode is given at length.

CHAPTER XV

THE NAVE

Dramatic "Mysteries"

One strange but at the same time very popular use of these great naves of abbatial and cathedral churches, such as, for instance, in Gloucester the Benedictine abbey, in the cathedral church of Wells in England, in the cathedral of Laon in France, was at certain solemn seasons of the year the performance of the Miracle or Mystery play. Some scholars have questioned whether the scene of these curious popular dramatic performances was the abbey or the cathedral church, and have suggested that the scene of these curious plays was the chapter room, or some other large hall or building in the vicinity of the sacred building. But there is abundant evidence that cannot be gainsaid that these Miracle or Mystery plays were at one period actually, and possibly not unfrequently, performed in the church itself. From the earlier years of the eleventh century the peoples of Northern and Central Europe had been awakened to take a new interest in religion, and listened with an evergrowing interest to Christian teachers. The religious teachers of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries seemed to have considered that *one* effective form of bringing home to the somewhat rude populations of the early middle ages the great religious truths was by representing in a dramatic and scenic form, striking episodes of

biblical history, and even of certain well-known legends from the lives of the saints. These plays were for a considerable period spoken in Latin, and no doubt partly because the utterances were made in Latin, a tongue of course mysterious and unknown to the masses, they maintained at first their solemn and serious character. Then as time went on, no doubt with a view of still further interesting the people ignorant of the Latin tongue, these "Mystery" plays began to be spoken in the vulgar tongue, such as in English or French. The rude and barbaric simplicity of the monkish versions of the old recitals gradually became vulgarised, and buffoonery was mingled too often with sacred dialogue, and in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries we find these theatrical performances gravely censured, and eventually forbidden by popes and councils. Even as early as A.D. 1210 and 1217 we find the note of alarm struck.

But there is no doubt that in the twelfth and thirteenth, and even as late as the fourteenth centuries, they were of frequent occurrence in the more important abbeys and churches, and were used as powerful and popular vehicles of instruction by the monks and ecclesiastics of these early mediæval centuries; and such great naves as the one upon which we are engaged at Gloucester, several times each year, no doubt, were the scenes of such scenic and dramatic representations, which were witnessed by numbers of the citizens.

"What a theatre! Such religious uses could not desecrate buildings so profoundly hallowed; the buildings would rather hallow the spectacle. The theatre was the church soaring to its majestic height, receding to its interminable length, broken by its stately divisions, with its many chapels, with its succession of arches. What

space for endless variety, if not for change of scene! How effective the light and shade, even by daylight; how much more so heightened by the command of an infinity of lamps, torches, tapers, now pouring their full effulgence on one majestic object, now showing, rather than enlightening, the deep gloom!

"How grand the music (even though somewhat rough and unscientific from the modern stand-point), either pervading the whole space with its rolling volumes of sound, or accompanying some solemn or tender monologue! . . . There was no event, however solemn and appalling, up to the Passion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, which was not, wrought into action, preached in this impressive way to awe-struck crowds. Legend, like the gospels, lent itself to the same purpose; instead of being read it was thrown into a stirring representation, and so offered to spectators as well as to hearers. . . . What remains, the dry skeleton of these Latin 'Mysteries,' can give no notion of what they were when alive; when alive with all their august impressive enthralling accessories, and their simple, unreasoning, but profoundly agitated hearers."[1]

One of the most dependable proofs that we possess of the widely extended prevalence of the custom of performing miracle-plays in certain great abbeys and churches in the early middle ages on the occasion of important festal seasons, is the reference to the practice by Durandus,[2] Bishop of Mende (Languedoc). In the "Rationale" he writes as follows in his description of the office of the

[1] Dean Milman, "Latin Christianity," Book xiv. chap. iv.

[2] See Durandus, "*Rationale divinorum officiorum*," Liber vi. cap. lxxxvii. An account of this greatest of mediæval liturgiologists, to whose vast and exhaustive work reference will often be made, is given below.

night of the Easter Festival: "After the singing of the Third Response with the 'Gloria Patri,' the choir is left, and a solemn procession takes place with lighted tapers to the spot where the sepulchre has been erected. Then certain persons arrayed as the holy women and the disciples John and Peter, are introduced, who come to the sepulchre to see what had happened. Other actors come forward habited as angels." Then follows a short description of a miracle play, in which the chorus take a part. Bishop Durandus especially mentions that words are put into the mouths of these actors, composed for the "play" not found in holy Scripture, but which, nevertheless, have been approved for their purpose. The position of this weighty reference in a work of such great authority as that of so eminent a liturgiologist as the Bishop of Mende, shows how general was this use in the early mediæval Church. (The date of Durandus's work was *circa* A.D. 1284.)

A short account of the miracle-play of "The Resurrection," one of the most famous of these early "Mysteries," and to which Durandus most probably refers, will be interesting.[1]

The play begins with the appearance of three monks

[1] "*The Easter Sepulchre*" in later times, as we read in the "Rites of Durham," which gives us a picture of a great abbatial church in the fifteenth and early years of the sixteenth century, "*was sett up in the morninge* (*of Good Friday*), *on the north side of the Quire, nigh to the High Altar.*" But at the period described in the "Rites of Durham," the miracle play had generally been discontinued owing to the abuses, above alluded to, which had crept in, and the Easter ceremonial, which had taken the place of the play, was shared in by the monks alone. Durandus, however, evidently referred to the more public dramatic performance in the nave. As we read in the French version of the "Rationale," the following direction, "*On part du Chœur, et on se dirige, avec des Cierges, et en procession solemnelle vers un endroit, ou l'on a apprêté la representation du tombeau, et ou l'on introduit des personnnes sous le forme et l'habillement des saintes femmes et des deux disciples, savoir Jean et Pierre, &c. &c.*"

dressed to personate the three Maries, who sing in turn a long rythmical hymn-like plaint which begins thus:—

First Mary. "Heu! pius pastor occidit
Quem culpa nulla infecit
O res plangenda!

Second Mary. Heu verus pastor abiit
Qui vitam sontis abstulit
O mors lugenda!"

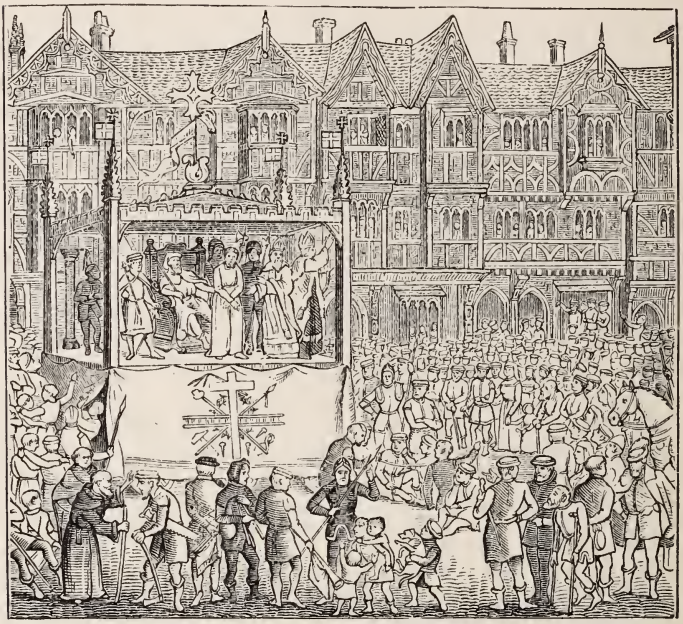
The three Maries then agree to go to the sepulchre to anoint the sacred body with spices to arrest corruption. Approaching the tomb they find an angel sitting outside the tomb robed with a golden alb (or long tunic reaching to the feet), with a mitre on his head, in his left hand a palm, in his right a branch with candles. He addresses the Maries as "Christicolæ," and asks for whom they are seeking. Here the dialogue passes into the words of Scripture. Subsequently the Maries turn from the angel and address the people or the congregation present, and tell them how they have met the angel, and what he told them. Mary Magdalene, now leaving her companions, hurries to meet two new actors in the drama—Peter and John—who are hurrying to the sepulchre. These two enter the tomb, and find the body of the Lord gone, and the grave-clothes left there. They tell what they have seen, and leave the stage. Mary Magdalene, however, remains weeping. Two angels are now visible sitting by the sepulchre, and they ask her why she weeps. They tell her by way of comfort how the Lord whom she seeks for is risen. She replies that her heart is also aflame with desire to *see* her Saviour. After that a monk, habited as a gardener, comes to her and speaks to her. Mary recognises the voice of the Lord. The dialogue which follows here is in the words of Scripture. When the Lord had

uttered the "Noli me tangere" (touch me not), he leaves her, and Mary turns and speaks to the listening audience, telling them the glad news of the Resurrection, of which she is now an eye-witness. The two angels come forward again and bid the people come and see the place where the Lord lay. The choir then take up the story and sing, closing with the "Te Deum."[1]

The clear reference of Durandus to the position of the Miracle Play of the Resurrection in the Easter services, occurring, as it does, in the midst of his careful liturgical directions and explanations, shows how, in the last quarter of the thirteenth century, these strange religious dramas had become a formally recognised part and parcel of some, at least, of the great festal services of the early mediæval Church. There were a number of these strange mystery plays extant in the twelfth and two following centuries. The plays generally dealt with purely scriptural subjects, such as "The Creation of the World," "The Fall of Man," "The Story of Cain and Abel," "The Crucifixion of Our Lord," "The Massacre of the Innocents" (an interesting *précis* of this last is given by Dean Milman, "Latin Christianity," book xiv. chap. iv.). We find two plays entitled "The Sacrifice of Isaac" and "The Mystery of the Holy Sacrament." Sometimes a celebrated martyr story, as that of S. Catherine, was represented, or the drama of S. Denys (of France). Occasionally the stage seems to have been a very elaborate piece of carpenter's

[1] This little mystery play of the Resurrection, which in the early middle ages was a favourite one for the Easter representation, was traditionally composed in the ninth century by a monk of the famous monastery of S. Gall. The above little *précis* is from the Appendix to the French version of Durandus's "Rationale," vol. iv., and is based upon an ancient MS. version originally in the library of the great religious house of S. Benedict on the Loire.

workmanship, in the form of a graduated platform in three divisions, rising one over the other, the actors being usually supplied by the monks of the adjoining monastery —some of them habited as women, the boys and children,



PILATE DELIVERING JESUS TO BE CRUCIFIED.
(Representation of a Coventry Pageant Vehicle of Fifteenth Century.)

as in the "Massacre of the Innocents," being no doubt the novices or pupils in the school of the religious house.

After the fourteenth century these representations became rare; still, however, in some cathedrals or abbeys they still formed part of the ritual at great feasts, notably

at Laon, in the north of France, where we hear of them as late as in the fifteenth century.[1]

As the thirteenth century advanced, the great and increasing popularity of these sacred performances induced wandering minstrels, jongleurs, trouvères, and other folk who gained a precarious livelihood by singing and reciting to the people, to imitate, in a rough way at first, these miracle plays.

Later we find the guilds of traders, who in the early Middle Ages played so important a part among the middle

[1] *Durandus*, Bishop of Mende, Languedoc, whose "Rationale" is quoted in the foregoing account of the miracle play (born in A.D. 1230, died A.D. 1296), was distinguished in early life for his great knowledge of Canon Law, of which he became a public teacher at Bologna and at Modena. His merits were soon recognised, and he received several honorary dignities in the Church, and subsequently the Deanery of Chartres, and during his stirring, work-filled life was largely consulted by several of the Popes of his time. In A.D. 1285 he was elected by the Chapter of Mende bishop of that see. He somewhat later declined the Archbishopric of Ravenna, which was pressed upon him by Pope Boniface VIII. This eminent theologian was the author of several works which had an enduring success. Among them his "Speculum Judiciale," an exhaustive treatise on Mediæval Law, had passed through some thirty-four editions between the years 1460 and the close of the sixteenth century. But the work by which Durandus will ever be known by, and to which reference is often made in this book, is his "Rationale Divinorum Officiorum," a vast and exhaustive treatise, completed about A.D. 1284, on everything connected with a church and its ministers, including the sacred building, its several parts, its sacred furniture, the ministers of the church, their vestments, &c.; the history and signification of the "Mass," and of the other "Offices" of the Church, the saints who are commemorated in the various special services, and lastly, the Church's calendar, the whole being divided into eight books. His learned biographer, M. Le Clerc, in the twentieth volume of the "Literary History of France" (compiled under the auspices of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres), tells us how this great work of Durandus, during the early days of printing (fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), was printed and reprinted more often than any other book (of course excepting the Holy Scriptures).

class of the cities, taking up this favourite sacred entertainment, and gradually introducing more dramatic variety and greater elaboration in the scenic side of these plays. By the middle of the fourteenth century the miracle play seemed to have reached its fullest development.

The cities of York, Wakefield, Chester, and Coventry were especially famous for these entertainments, but we read of them in many other important centres of population. The *répertoire* of these religious dramas became very considerable, and included in their themes most of the principal events in Bible history, both of the Old and New Testaments, from the story of Adam and Eve in Eden down to scenes of the Passion story, and, indeed, pictured representations of the awful Day of Judgment.

"These plays, on the whole, were reverent and seemly in tone, full of dramatic life and energy, and in some instances, notably in the plays of the Passion and Crucifixion, we find realism of a most impressive nature."

It is computed that more than ninety printed editions, in different languages, of the "Rationale" appeared between the second half of the fifteenth century and the close of the seventeenth.

Then followed a lengthened period when the work of the great liturgical writer of the Middle Ages was comparatively neglected, if not forgotten. In the last half-century, however, the wealth of research and the profound liturgical scholarship of Durandus, even if at times his conclusions are somewhat fanciful, has been generally acknowledged by scholars. For instance, *Dom Guéranger*, the learned Abbot of Solesmes, estimates this work of the Bishop of Mende, "comme le dernier mot du moyen age sur le mystique du culte divin." *Montalembert* speaks of the "Rationale" as "Le code le plus complet de le liturgique." *Viollet-le-Duc* remarks, in his "Dictionnaire de l'Architecture, *s.v.* Autel," touching the "Rationale," "que l'on ne saurait trop lire et méditer lorsque qu'on veut connaitre le moyen âge catholique." The edition used in this book is the admirable French version of M. Charles Barthélemy (Paris, 1854), which edition has the advantage of being supplemented with many learned notes and elucidations.

The 'Mystery' Play

Many and various were the trading guilds who, with great care and cost, produced these curious performances, which, especially during the fourteenth and following century, were a powerful factor in the education of the

HELL MOUTH.
(*A favourite scene in the Mystery Plays.*)

people, such as the guilds of tanners, drapers, barbers, vintners, smiths, butchers, skinners, fishmongers, and many others.[1]

[1] "The Miracle Play in England," by Sidney W. Clarke, 1899.

But their adoption by these various lay agencies gradually dealt a death-blow to the performances in churches and abbeys. The greater licence permissible to these public performances, the increased pains and cost bestowed upon their production, naturally injured the original popularity of the monkish and ecclesiastical plays in churches, and as they became more general in the street and market-place, the practice of church performances grew rarer and rarer. The disfavour, too, with which, as time went on, they came not unnaturally to be regarded by the stricter and more austere rulers in the Church contributed to their gradual abandonment, save in a few instances, in the sacred buildings. But in the age when the Romanesque nave of Gloucester and other similar mighty piles were erected, to the miracle play belonged its early simplicity and earnestness, and this pictorial method of teaching the people great truths was regarded with approval by those who bore rule in the monastic orders and in the Church generally; and it may fairly be said that one of the uses to which these vast Romanesque, or, as they are popularly termed, Norman naves—a notable instance of such naves being now the subject of our little study—were put, was the assembling of a great mass of the citizens dwelling beneath the shadow of the mighty abbey to hear and to see the dramatic representation by the monks of portions of the Passion Tragedy or the more remote mystic story of the Fall and of the Last Judgment.

It is an interesting and by no means a baseless thought which in these grey and time-worn naves, with their mighty pillars, their vast round arches, their dim vistas of gloomy aisles, sees the cradle of the English drama, which in its higher and nobler development has become

so powerful an agent in the education of the peoples of the Europe of to-day.

Miracle[1] plays may be said to have ceased to be performed finally at the end of the fifteenth century, a brilliant company of playwrights, with Shakespeare as their chief, having arisen in the golden age of Elizabethan letters. The writings of these famous men inaugurated a new departure altogether in dramatic representation.

Representation of the Prodigal Son.

[1] The words "Mystery" and "Miracle" Play are commonly used indiscriminately to denote *a religious play*. More accurately, the plot of a *Miracle* play is based upon circumstances which occurred in the lives of saints and martyrs, and a *Mystery* play is based alone on the Scriptural narrative. Mr. Clarke, in his interesting little history of the "Miracle" play in England (1899), after giving the above definition of the terms, curiously derives the word "mystery" as applied to a play from "minister (ecclesiæ)," because *the clergy* were the first actors. The word "mystery" is, however, the Greek μυστήριον (from μυέω, to initiate). A μυστήριον was the term probably used by the Greeks for a show or scenic representation of some mythical legend.

CHAPTER XVI

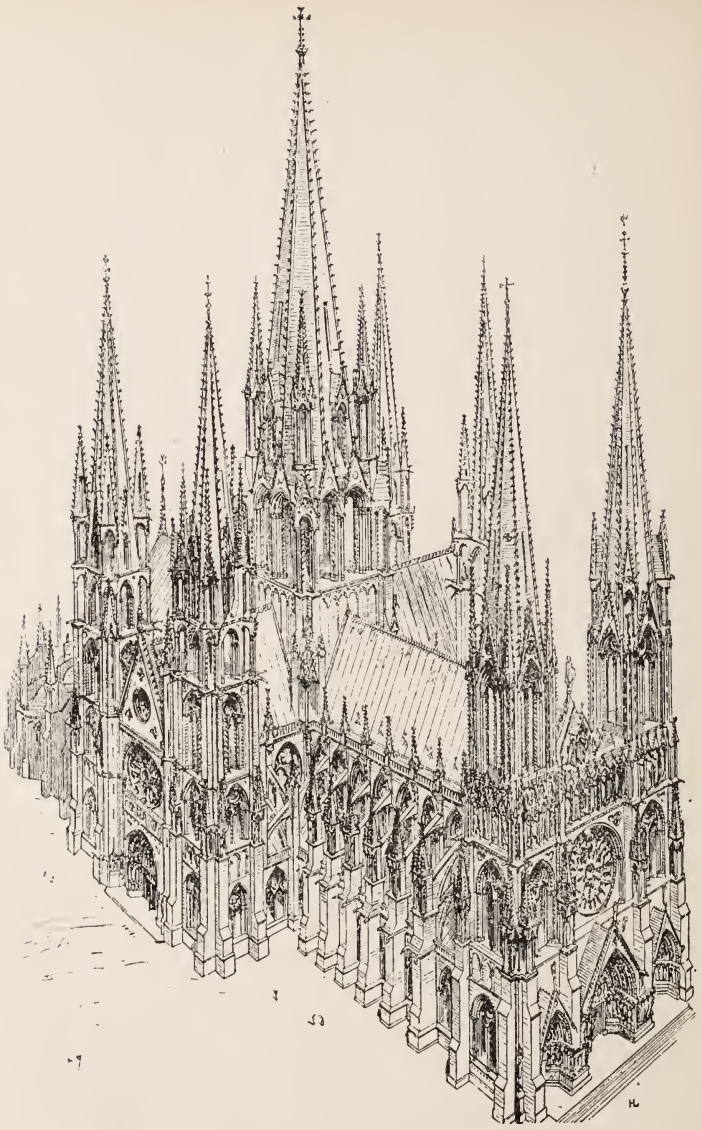
DEVELOPMENT OF THE NAVE—ITS SYMBOLISM

It would seem here to be the place to notice how out of these great abbatial churches, with their mighty naves, built for the people and popular uses, grew up another striking development in church building, especially noticeable in that part of Northern and Central France under the rule of the king (le domaine royal), which led to the building of cathedrals on a scale vaster than had ever been attempted before, and which has never been repeated. We cite the cathedrals of Paris, Reims, Chartres, Amiens, to take conspicuous and well-known examples of this marvellous group.

In less than a century after the erection of such naves as those of the abbeys of Gloucester, Durham, S. Albans, and many others in England and on the continent of Europe, something of a change passed over the Western Church. In the eleventh and most of the twelfth century the religious teaching and influence was largely in the hands of monastics. Very frequently the monastery abbey was of greater dimensions and of more importance than the cathedral of the diocese. Various causes were at work, however, which cannot be detailed here, such as the rapid growth of city populations and the increase of the royal authority, the formation of various more or less wealthy guilds of traders in the rapidly growing cities, which altering the balance of power, threw more influence and

power into the bishops' hands. No doubt a certain jealousy on the part of the bishops of the great monastic foundations which had so rapidly sprung up in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was also at work. At all events, we find towards the end of the twelfth century a great movement, under the direction of the bishops, apparent throughout Western Christendom, to build huge cathedrals. The various popular uses to which the large naves of abbatial and other churches had been adapted no doubt had attracted universal attention, and the bishops undoubtedly took advantage of this growing attachment of the people to these religious buildings in the use of which they shared so freely.

Up to the end of the twelfth century, the period corresponding to the reigns of Richard Cœur-de-Lion and John in England, the cathedrals, save in rare and peculiar instances had not attained to any vast proportions. Many of the monastic churches had been built on a grander scale than the cathedral. Such abbeys as Gloucester, Ely, S. Albans, and Durham in England, more noticeably Cluny, and the great daughter abbeys of Cluny in France, were in fact statelier piles than the ordinary city cathedral where the bishop had his seat. But in the closing years of the twelfth century, and all through the thirteenth century, cathedrals, in France especially, on a yet grander scale arose. All the popular uses to which we have seen the nave of Gloucester and of such like abbeys ever devoted, were, so to speak, *exaggerated* under the fostering care of the bishop, anxious to win the people yet more to take an interest in religion; and the nave of the new cathedral was built and even used for all kinds of popular assemblies, a religious aspect, however, of course being given to these great gatherings. The interest of the people was



The Cathedral at Reims (if complete).

keenly excited, and the great cities rapidly increasing at this period in wealth and population, with their rich and powerful growing "guild" organisations composed of the various trades, vied with each other in providing means for the building of these marvellous piles. We instance Paris, Reims, Chartres, Bourges, Amiens, as well-known examples. These stately homes of prayer and assembly the citizen looked on as *their own*, as the centre of all their civil and religious life. The whole of the enormous interior of such a cathedral was in the first instance, in fact, *one vast nave*. The choir was unenclosed. Few if any chapels or altars interfered with the presence of the crowds. In several cases even the transepts were dispensed with. Thus, the mighty cathedral of the thirteenth century was especially "the church of the people," the centre of the growing civic life, the meeting-place of the growing guilds of traders. It was also the centre of popular education; for a long time some of the most famous schools of Europe were attached to the house of prayer. In these thirteenth-century cathedrals there was for a time no separation at all of clergy and laity. The east end was simply provided with movable seats for the officiating ministers and the bishop. The ornaments of the choir, Durandus, the great liturgical writer at the close of that century, tells us, were simply hangings of tapestry and embroidery and many coloured carpets, which could be removed from the church and replaced at pleasure, and brilliantly adorned banners, which did not obstruct the view.

Alone, the high altar at or near the eastern end, with its veils surrounding it, obstructed the general view. The cathedral, with this solitary exception, was a huge open space from west to east. So far from separating the

clergy, or wishing to keep the people at a distance from a full view of the mysteries of the faith, the bishop and the hierarchy desired the presence of the crowds. The most sacred rites of the greater festivals of the Church were so arranged in these great people's churches that all could see and take an active part in them. It was a protest against the old monastic spirit which shrouded the more sacred ceremonies in mystery, and kept the people at a distance. This state of things, this feeling on the part of the bishop and hierarchy, only, it is true, lasted a comparatively short time. It began towards the close of the twelfth century. It continued all through the thirteenth century, but the earlier years of the fourteenth century again witnessed a change in feeling on the part of the hierarchy. Once more mystery surrounded its sacred rites, and the choirs began to be enclosed, and the officiating clergy were shut off from the people. The popular zeal which had flamed up in the preceding century (the thirteenth), and which had built the enormous cathedrals we have been speaking of, grew cold, and soon almost died down, and the fourteenth and following centuries witnessed the foundation of few if any great houses of God, and even those which had been commenced and scarcely finished when the popular fervour was at its height, languished for want of funds, and were never completed.

This wonderful movement so specially observable in "Royal France" (le domaine royal), to popularise the cathedral, to interest the people in religious matters, to give a religious colour to all their business and even pleasures, as we have said, soon gave place to the old priestly and sacerdotal policy which more or less in all

times has too often characterised the teaching and practice of the Christian Church. Abuses, even acts of desecration, by the people of the great Church they had come to love so well soon crept in, and no doubt contributed largely to the return to the old state of things in the fourteenth and following centuries. But what we have dwelt upon had been an attempt, rude perhaps, wanting in safeguards against irreverence and excesses, to associate the people with the clergy, to interest the people more keenly in religious services. It had been on the whole a laudable effort to break down the icy barrier which has in all times, more or less, kept the masses of the population from feeling that Christianity belonged to them equally with the ordained priests and vowed ministers of the Faith; nor did the people ever forget the lessons of the thirteenth-century attempt. It was in France especially, though by no means exclusively, that the attempt was made. The memorials of the attempt are still visible in those colossal and splendid though unfinished cathedrals, such as Nôtre Dame of Paris, Reims, Chartres, and Amiens, built by the people's efforts, be it remembered.

It was in France that the most terrible of all wars on Christianity was waged in A.D. 1792–3, and it is a remarkable fact that whilst innumerable monastic abbeys were destroyed, together with countless houses and castles of the nobles and of the wealthier classes, not one of the greater cathedrals of France perished in the terrible catastrophe. They were, comparatively speaking, even but little damaged in the wild tempest of fury. The memory of the thirteenth century had never quite died away; the old love of the people for those grand houses of God built for them, and in great measure by them, was deeply rooted in their hearts.

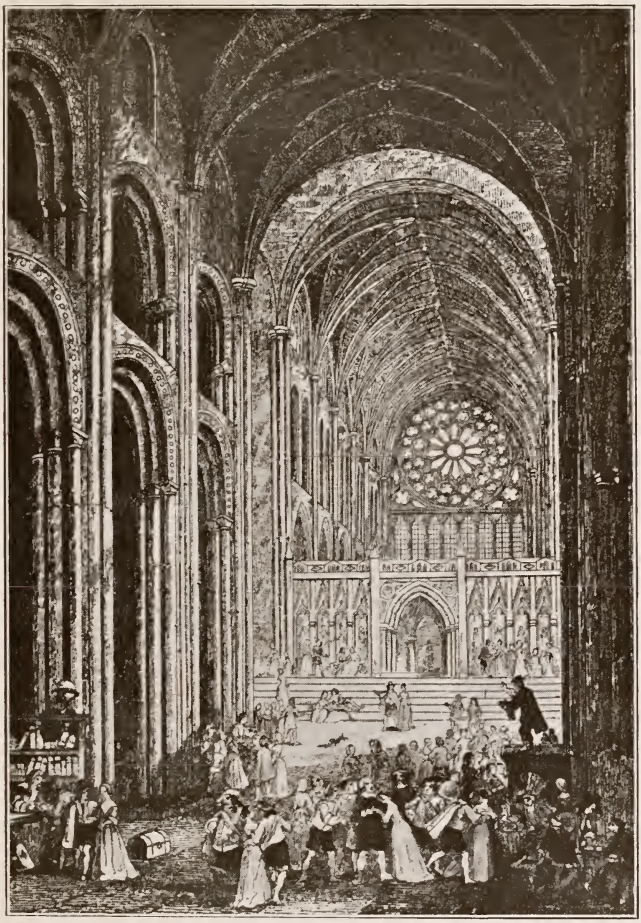
But abuses soon crept in. At an early period trading began in the hallowed walls. At first probably confined to religious objects pertaining to the services, such as lights, candles, &c., the desecrating practice spread, and soon pedlars and vendors of various objects plied their business openly in the church. No doubt this was one of the reasons alleged, and a just one, for limiting the general public access to certain parts of the sacred building, and gradually of doing away with all civic rights which sanctioned meetings, and of holding assemblies in the cathedral.[1]

The remarkable picture we are about to reproduce of the desecration of the nave of S. Paul's, London, several centuries later, is a reminiscence of the thirteenth-century effort to popularise a great cathedral. It shows us too clearly why the effort was naturally doomed to failure, how inevitably the well-meant but sadly mistaken licence quickly degenerated into what all serious minds could not help viewing as the gravest sacrilege.

The writer quoted is discussing the restoration work carried out by Inigo Jones under Laud, Bishop of London, in A.D. 1633, when Charles I. was king. "The restoration of the external fabric drew attention to an abuse of long standing. The nave and aisles had from times beyond the memory of men then living been used as places of public resort. Porters carried their burdens across the church as in the open street. Paul's Walk, as the long central aisle (the nave) was called, was the rendezvous of the men of business who had a bargain to drive, and of the loungers whose highest wish was to while away an idle hour in agreeable society.

"To the men of the reigns of James I. and Charles I. it

[1] For additional details on this curious attempt to popularise the cathedral, see pp. 159, 160.



PAUL'S WALK

was all that the coffee-houses became to the men of the reigns of James II. and Charles II., and all that the club-houses are to the men of the reign of Victoria. There were to be heard the latest rumours of the day. . . . There, too, was to be heard the latest scandal. . . . When the gay world had moved away, children took the place of their elders, making the old arches ring with their merry laughter. The clergy within the choir complained that their voices were drowned by the uproar, and that neither prayers nor sermon reached the ears of the congregation. With this misuse of the cathedral church of the capital Charles, not a moment too soon, resolved to interfere."[1]

We have thus traced roughly the history of the "nave"[2] from the period of the building of vast churches, after the awakening of the Church in the course of the eleventh century, and have shown the reasons for the nave's great dimensions. It was the religious home of the people, and *this* was the design and the object held in view by the monastic orders, to whom largely in the eleventh and twelfth centuries belonged all religious influence and power. In the last section we have dwelt upon a further development of the nave during the thirteenth century under influences non-monastic, drawing our examples principally from France, from that portion particularly in the north and centre comprising the sphere

[1] S. R. Gardner, "Hist. of England," vol. vii. chap. lxxiii.

[2] More details respecting this curious development of the "nave" by the hierarchy, with the bishop of the diocese at their head, with the view of more closely associating the people with the Church, will be found in *Viollet-le-Duc's* interesting and suggestive work, "Histoire d'un Hôtel de Ville et d'une Cathédrale," chaps. iv. v. vi., and in his great "Dictionnaire de l'Architecture Française," vols. i. ii. iii. *s.v.* Architecture ("Réligieuse," "Monastique,") "Clôture," "Cathédrale," "Autel"; and *Durandus, Bishop of Mende,* "Rationale," Lib. i. chap. iii., &c.

of the influence of the kings of France, known as "le domaine royal."

This last development multiplied and exaggerated the original popular uses of the nave, and seems to have suggested the reasons which led to the building of those enormous cathedrals such as Reims, Chartres, and Amiens, which have been the objects of wonder and admiration to succeeding ages. But this last development of the "nave" was of comparatively short duration, lasting about 100 years, the abuses consequent upon the later development being too glaring.

The term "Nave" is usually derived somewhat fancifully from the Latin *navis*, a ship. The Nave from the west porch to the Choir screen represents fairly accurately the form of a ship with the keel uppermost (*navis inversa*). The mediæval writers loved to trace a symbolical reference in every part of a church—in its furniture, in its rites, in the dress of its ministers. The symbolism is often beautiful and true; not unfrequently, however, somewhat strained and unnatural. This came from the practice, commendable enough, of using the sacred building as the Book of Stone out of which innumerable lessons were constantly being drawn for the many worshippers in an age when books were rare and the power even of reading was only possessed by few. Durandus of Mende (thirteenth century) tells us that the church (or abbey) represents a human form—the Choir, where is placed the high altar, being the head; the Transepts are the arms and hands; and the Nave is the rest of the body.

This simple image was soon elaborated, and the Church was thought to symbolise the dead Christ on the Cross—the Transepts representing His outstretched arms; His

pierced hands the Transept porches and doors; His body and legs were the Nave. The deviation (no uncommon feature) in the axis of the building at the east end imitates, some writers think, the attitude of the Redeemer on the Cross after death—the drooping position of the head and neck after life was extinct.[1]

A yet deeper and more spiritual symbolism is alluded to here by Durandus of Mende in the general triple division of a church. He quotes Richard of Saint Victor as his authority for seeing in the Sanctuary, the Choir, and Nave a symbol of the triple order of the saved—the smallness of the Sanctuary, where the high altar is erected, typifying the few in the first order or rank of the Redeemed; the far larger Choir representing those in the second rank; and the vast Nave the great multitude of the "saved."

In other portions of the Nave—the people's book of stone—this same eminent mediæval teacher sees many and various symbols of great truths; among the more striking of these, in the vista of columns which support the massive building, he considers that the bishops and doctors are portrayed, as they with their teaching of the Catholic doctrines bear up the church of God. This kind of picture-teaching Durandus of Mende delights in enlarging upon. He compares, for instance, the solid bases of the columns or piers also to the bishops and the successors of the apostles who support the weight of the Church. In the soaring height of the Nave of a great abbey church he sees hope pictured—the hope of the eternal future and of God's reward to the faithful.

The very roof with its elaborate and coloured vaulting,

[1] Viollet-le-Duc, however, questions if this last thought was ever in the minds of the great mediæval builders.

which with its many vaults and arches covers the whole edifice, represents that broad and massive charity and love which cover the multitude of sins. The pavement is rich with hidden meaning in Durandus of Mende's eyes. It typifies the strong foundation of faith; it is a picture image too of Christ's poor—the blessed poor in spirit who are ever humbling themselves; it is a symbol also of the people who labour and toil. George Herbert, A.D. 1593–1632, well caught the spirit of Durandus of Mende when he sang of the church floor thus in his *once*[1] well-known poem of the "Church."

"Mark you the floore? that square and speckled stone
which looks so firm and strong
is Patience.
And the other black and grave, wherewith each one
is checker'd all along,
Humilitie.
The gentle rising, which on either hand
leads to the Quire above,
is Confidence.
But the sweet cement, which in one sure band
ties the whole frame, is Love
and Charitie."

Durandus through many closely printed pages, draws out this curious and interesting, though perhaps in places somewhat far-fetched symbolism and symbol-teaching, of every part of the nave and choir of a mediæval abbey, telling us how the *length* of the nave figures the long-suffering (longanimity) of the Church in adversity; its breadth tells of charity, how the choir and sanctuary picture heaven, while the nave is the emblem of the earth. The two worlds are separated by a gulf which

[1] In the seventeenth century it is said that George Herbert's poetical reputation was greater than Milton's.

can only be passed by the help of the cross which towers over the great rood screen. The whole form and distribution of such a church was in fact a silent confession of faith. It typified the creed. Everywhere was found the mystic number. The Trinity was proclaimed by the nave and its two aisles. The great rose window which flashed in the westering sun was the unity; the whole building was the cross. The awful crypt below represented with its dim, uncertain light, the dwelling-place of the soul of man after death awaiting the bright light of the resurrection morning.

CHAPTER XVII

THE TRANSEPT

THERE were stone screens which in Gloucester Abbey once crossed the entire building, closing up the two aisles as well as the main central nave. The aisle screens and the altars once in front of them have disappeared, though a modern choir screen remains in the same position.

The aisles are now simply closed at the eastern ends with a light ugly iron rail, each with a little plain gate. Through this gate near the extremity of the south aisle, some 30 feet farther to the east, opens out the south transept. In some respects, as we shall see presently, this particular portion of the pile architecturally is one of the most interesting buildings in England.

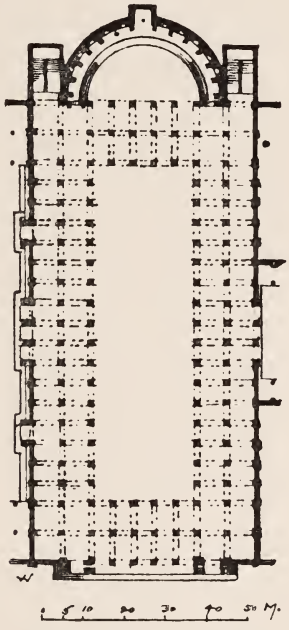
Now the *transept*, as a portion of well-nigh all important churches, such as abbeys and cathedrals, and of some, though not all, of the larger parish churches, dates from the earliest period at which these buildings began to be erected.

We have already noticed how directly after the year of our Lord 313, when the terms of the famous edict of the Emperor Constantine announced that Christianity was to be henceforth the religion of the Empire, the *Basilica*, the hall of justice of the Roman empire, was in some few cases perhaps actually adopted, in very many others largely imitated, as the most convenient form for the great temples of that religion which Rome henceforth adopted as the religion of the people owning allegiance to her.

The Transept

It is in these basilicas, before they were adopted as the model of the churches of Christianity, that we must seek and find the germ whence has sprung this important characteristic feature of a great Christian church—the Transept.

The adjoining little plan of the Ulpian Basilica at Rome, built by the Emperor Trajan, *circa* A.D. 114, will show the position of what we have termed the "germ" of the transept in a Pagan basilica, together with the two chambers on either side of the chalcidicum or transept.



PLAN OF THE ULPIAN BASILICA OF THE EMPEROR TRAJAN, *circa* A.D. 114.

The transept in a Pagan basilica was an open space between the tribunal of the judge placed in the semi-circular apse and the colonnades, afterwards represented by the nave and aisles of a Christian church; these colonnades occupied the large portion of the great hall.

This open space was fenced off from the colonnades by a low wall or balustrade. Sometimes this little screen was of costly material, such as marble, as was seen in the "Basilica Jovis," and the open space within the balustrade was used by advocates and by official persons connected with the court, the low wall or balustrade serving to keep these apart from the general public, who were admitted into what may be termed the body of the basilica or hall.

It also helped to remove the tribunal and its business somewhat from the noise and movement going on in the body of the building, without in any way abandoning that idea of publicity which belongs rightly to a court of justice.

The ancient name for this transversal space immediately in front of the tribunal in the semicircular apse in pagan times was termed "the chalcidicum." Sometimes the "chalcidicum" of a Roman basilica was closed at either extremity by a chamber used for archives or documents connected with the courts. These "chambers" are shown in the little plan of the Ulpian basilica.

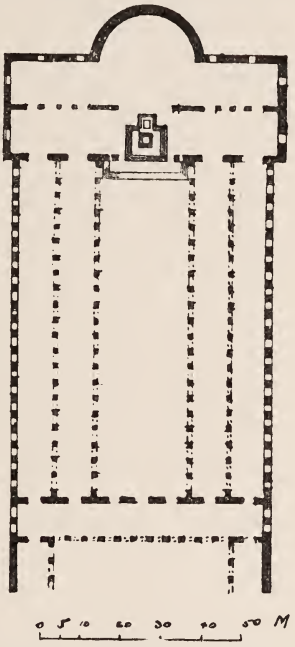
On the adaptation of the basilica model for a Christian church, the chalcidicum was at once introduced, its convenience being quickly recognised as a reserved enclosure for priests, deacons, and others directly engaged in the various ceremonies and duties of Christian worship, the altar occupying a position in or immediately in front of the apse, where the old Roman tribunal had been placed. The term *transsept* (as it would be more correctly spelt) gradually came into use, its meaning and derivation being obvious—*trans*, across, and *septum* (*sepio*), a fence, barrier, or wall.

In some cases the "transsept" seems to have been slightly prolonged beyond the aisles of the nave, thus giving the building somewhat the appearance of a cross (a cross in the old pagan days not always possessing the upper limb). The full developed cruciform plan in which the "transept" (to adopt the common form of spelling) plays so important a part was not the original type of a Christian church, but was only arrived at after some centuries of development. In the tenth and eleventh centuries we find it in its complete form. It was the needs of a monastic church which no doubt produced the arrangement which we associate with the perfected form of a great Christian church.

The Transept

The adjoining plan of the Roman basilica of S. Paul "outside the walls," on the road to Ostia, will give some idea of an important early Christian basilica, built on the old "basilican" model, with a transept slightly prolonged beyond the aisles.

The basilica of S. Paul, built on the original site of a little church erected by the Emperor Constantine, was commenced in A.D. 386 under the direction of the Christian Emperor Honorius, and ranks with S. Peter's as one of the chiefest of the Roman basilicas. The importance of the "transept" in this stately early Christian temple will be at once seen from the plan. The length of this magnificent church, built in the last quarter of the fourth century, was roughly about 450 feet. The transepts extended about 230 feet from end to end. It will be noticed they very slightly projected beyond the aisles.



PLAN OF CHRISTIAN BASILICA ("S. PAUL - WITHOUT - THE-WALLS," ROME), SHOWING THE POSITION OF THE TRANSEPT AND THE AISLES, COMPLETED BY THE EMPEROR HONORIUS, *circa* A.D. 400.[1]

The basilica of "S. Paul without the walls" at Rome

[1] This stately basilica, the unique specimen in Rome of a great basilica existing still on the original lines, was almost completely destroyed by fire in A.D. 1823. It has since been restored at enormous cost according to the plan and dimensions of the original church. *Cp.* illustration, p. 5.

was, until the Reformation in the sixteenth century, under the titular supremacy of the sovereign of England.

Still the transept, as we commonly understand this important feature in a church, giving it that cruciform shape naturally dear to Christian sentiment, can scarcely be said to have made its appearance before the marvellous and striking revival of the eleventh century. A reference to the well-known plan of the church of the abbey of S. Gall, drawn, as was supposed, by Eginhard, *circa* A.D. 820, will show that the old basilica form was closely followed in this typical church of the ninth century, and the whole of the building is largely filled with enclosed altars and shrines. In the domed churches which began to be built in the East in the earlier years of the sixth century, a different form altogether from the basilica model was usually adopted, but it was a form in no wise resembling the cross-shaped church with which we are familiar.

These churches, which from the time of the Emperor Justinian, in the first years of the sixth century, were erected in considerable numbers in the East and in those parts of Italy (*e.g.* Ravenna) where Eastern influences for a time prevailed, are generally known as Byzantine, and were usually, though not always, especially in the earlier examples, built on the plan of a Greek cross (that is, with the four arms of the cross of equal length), with a large cupola or dome rising from the centre. The general plan of these Byzantine churches usually gives the impression of their being circular within, square, or oblong, now and again circular or polygonal without.

In the great church-building age of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, in which the monastic spirit to which

the Burgundian Abbey of Cluny and its many daughter communities gave so marked an impulse, we find the "transepts" are almost universal features in the abbatial churches erected in such amazing numbers in Northern and Central Europe, and the definite "cross" plan with which we are so familiar, became visible in all these ecclesiastical structures. This form supplied a want. The abbey of the eleventh and twelfth centuries was at once the private chapel of the "religious" who dwelt in the monastery clustering under the shadow of the abbey walls. It was also in the many centres of population in the midst of which these abbatial churches were often built, as for instance, Gloucester, and in other innumerable instances, *the church of the people.* The spacious transepts were needed for the large numbers of monks and others dwelling and working in the monastery, for whom the eastern end, sanctuary and choir, provided insufficient space. The screen or screens, with separate altars placed against them, divided usually the eastern end —sanctuary, choir, and transepts—from the great nave and its aisles, to which the people generally—pilgrims, travellers, traders, and others—had free access, thus leaving the eastern limb of the building and the transepts for the use of the religious, and for their frequent services.

A much rarer feature was the presence of a smaller secondary transept placed east of the principal transept. The enormous Abbey of Cluny, rebuilt by Abbot S. Hugh, A.D. 1089, and finished and consecrated A.D. 1131, possessed this double transept, the large numbers of "religious" who dwelt at Cluny when Cluny was at the height of its power and influence, rendering this addition to the monks' portion of the abbey desirable. This double transept never, however, became a general feature in

France. The abbatial Church of Cluny, and the Cathedrals of Verdun and Besançon are quoted as the only known examples of this peculiar double transept development in France. It was, however, not unfrequent in the great German churches in the Rhine country built at this period. In England the double transept variety was more common. It has even been termed a peculiarly English feature. Well-known examples are the Cathedrals of Lincoln, Salisbury, and York, and the splendid abbatial Church of Beverley in Yorkshire.

A curious temporary reaction from the universal adoption of transepts as a regular portion of all great churches is noticeable, especially in France, in the popular movement of the later years of the twelfth and during the thirteenth century, when under episcopal influence the mighty cathedrals, especially in the royal sphere of influence of the kings of France, were projected and to a large extent completed. The enormous houses of prayer of Reims, Bourges, Amiens, Chartres, and Paris, and others, were originally designed *without* transepts, the whole building being planned for popular services and gatherings. A glance at the ground plans of these enormous cathedrals, as originally designed, shown in Viollet-le-Duc's "Dictionnaire de l'Architecture," vol. ii. *s.v.* "Cathedrals," notably on pp. 294–5, 316, will show striking examples of this temporary reaction against the transept idea in the Cathedrals of Paris, Bourges, and Reims. The introduction of the transepts into these great buildings took place some hundred years afterwards, in some cases later, when the original purely popular conception, a dream of the thirteenth century, faded away. We have already dwelt at some length upon this.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE TRANSEPT—THE PECULIAR ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST OF THE SOUTH TRANSEPT IN GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

To generalise on a great subject is always hard and often precarious, and the deductions arrived at are usually open to criticism; still at times such a generalisation is useful, and really helps the student to grasp the truth of a subject which mere facts and dates would scarcely enable him to arrive at. This must be the apologia for the following little rough conclusions[1] which though in the main just and accurate, still, if examined in detail, would naturally contain many exceptions.

In the year 1175, when Henry II. (Plantagenet) was king, William de Sens, who had probably previously been engaged on the recently completed cathedral in that city, was employed by the monks of Canterbury to restore the splendid Norman choir of the cathedral which, in 1174, had been destroyed by fire. He carried on the works for some five years when he met with a terrible accident in a fall. Returning to France, he left the restoration in the hands of his assistant, known under the name of William the Englishman. The choir was completed under purely

[1] Some of these conclusions and deductions on the invention and adoption in England of "Perpendicular Architecture" as the national style, will be found put out with great care and at considerable length by Mr. G. G. Scott in his essay on "The History of English Church Architecture," chap. v. pp. 172–180 (4to, 1881).

French designs in A.D. 1185. It resembles closely the design of Sens, only it is more elaborate. This was the *first* great work in which pointed (Gothic) architecture made its first appearance in England, and marks clearly the transition between the Romanesque and Gothic styles.

During the remainder of the twelfth, all through the thirteenth, and well into the fourteenth century, Gothic architecture continued to make extraordinary and brilliant progress. "In the keen race in which, so to speak, the two countries, England and France, were engaged, France has generally a small advantage. This was the case, especially in 'the royal domain' extending over Northern, Eastern, and parts of Central France, of which Paris was the centre, and the lead then taken was only a lead, yet it is one that cannot be questioned."

But after the first quarter of the fourteenth century we have to mark a singular and striking change. The English artists adopted a course of their own, completely parting company with their French brothers. We date this "parting of the ways" from about the year 1329.

The scene of the first "parting of the ways" was the Benedictine abbey of S. Peter at Gloucester. But the strange and, comparatively speaking, extraordinarily rapid adoption of the Gloucester departure in architecture in this island was owing to a strong English feeling which had sprung up.

It was, in fact, a reaction. "Men had become in the course of time dissatisfied with the elegance which it had been for a century [the period during which the so-called 'Decorated' style had prevailed] the aim of the architects to attain. Every refinement of curve, every subtlety of line that ingenuity could devise or taste adorn, had been

adopted and perfected, until there seemed no possibility of a further grace.

"As a natural consequence, the very sweetness of the style began at length to cloy, and a reaction in favour of a return toward severity set in. . . . The logical progress of the flowing style was now complete, saving one step. It was left to the French and German designers to take that step, and to carry on the principle of continuity to its complete outcome, in the luxuriant exaggeration of the flamboyant."

The Gloucester Abbey change in style we are about to dwell on, worked a revolution in architecture. The return to a severer ornamentation, the effect at once graceful and impressive which the new style produced, was soon recognised; it pleased the English taste, and touched the national imagination. Perpendicular, Third Gothic or Pointed architecture, as it is sometimes termed, gradually made its way throughout England. It completely, in the end, superseded the former schools known as Early English and as Decorated, and before many years "Perpendicular," as it was subsequently termed, had become the national ecclesiastical architecture. It was reproduced in time in a thousand instances, alike in the humblest parish church as in such lordly abbeys as those of Gloucester and Winchester.

It had a long reign, enduring through the remaining years of the fourteenth century, and all through the fifteenth, producing some of its greatest triumphs on the eve of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, in such piles as the exquisite Lady Chapel of Gloucester, the stately chapel of King's College, Cambridge, and the graceful Bell tower of the now vanished abbey of Evesham, continuing to be the church architecture *par excellence* of England till

the great upheaval in the reign of Henry VIII. for a long long period put an end to all the beautiful and touching creations in stone which had been the glory of the middle ages.[1]

The story of the transformation of the Norman south transept of Gloucester is indeed a twice-told tale, but the conversion in the earlier years of the fourteenth century of the stern Romanesque work of Serlo, the chaplain of the Conqueror, into the graceful Perpendicular we now gaze on, is an event of such paramount importance in the history of English church architecture that it must in this place be briefly repeated, for it is no baseless legend which points to the south transept of Gloucester Cathedral as the birthplace of the far-famed Perpendicular style.

Some years before the south transept was touched, somewhere about the year 1318, some structural defects which threatened the gravest consequences to the building were detected in the south aisle.[2] An important work was undertaken. The reigning abbot, John Thokey, was not content with simply repairing or reconstructing the

[1] "Of the perfected perpendicular manner," writes Mr. G. G. Scott, in the essay on "The History of English Church Architecture," from which the two passages above quoted are taken, "the examples are abundant and well known. If I had to name one as pre-eminent where all are admirable, I should be tempted, perhaps, to select the Quire and Lady Chapel of Gloucester. Yet the romantic beauty of this noble work is matched, though it cannot be surpassed, by the stately elegance of the eastern portion of York Minster."

The traces of these structural defects are still plainly visible in the south aisle. In the *interior* the wall in some parts falls outward as much as eleven inches in its full height, while on the *exterior* the more recent work of Abbot Thokey (A.D. 1318) inclines not more than four inches. The addition of Thokey was placed on and against the old Norman wall, with very massive buttresses, and deeply recessed windows decorated with the "ball-flower."

damaged aisle, but he partially recased it in the style of his day, especially the exterior portion, the recasing being in the favourite and ornate fashion of the period, which is known as "Decorated." Abbot Thokey's beautiful work endures to this day, and is known as one of the richest examples of the "decorated" style of the fourteenth century. Scarred and defaced as it is by the winter storms which have blown up the Severn estuary for nigh six hundred years, the old abbot's work is still to those who gaze on it from the quiet College Green a very dream of beauty and tender grace, with its countless quaint "ball-flowers"[1] carved on the elaborate window tracery.

We possess no confirmation as to the exact circumstances which led Abbot Thokey's successor, John Wigmore, to take in hand the great architectural work in the south transept, a work which was fraught with such momentous consequences not only as regards Gloucester Abbey, but in connection with well-nigh all the architec-

[1] Has this favourite and well-known ornament of this period, generally coinciding with the unhappy reign of Edward II., been rightly described as a ball-flower? Mr. G. G. Scott suggests the following emendation to the popular explanation: "This ornament is not in reality a flower at all, but simply a common horse-bell, such as may be seen hanging from the necks of country teams. The leather thong which connects these little bells is commonly indicated clearly enough in these sculptured representations. They have no doubt an heraldic significance, and I think it possible that they may have been the badge of those who, in the dissensions of this reign, adhered to the party of the Queen" (Isabella).—Essay on "The History of Church Architecture," chap. iv.

Another interesting suggestion has been made respecting this beautiful "Decorated" ornament—that it was perhaps a *hawk's bell*. Others suppose it represented a pomegranate, to which it certainly bears some resemblance, and that it was introduced into the English architecture of the period out of compliment to Eleanor of Castile, the well-loved wife of King Edward I., who died A.D. 1296. It is very rarely found in France.

tural work in England undertaken during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. A desire to replace the old and somewhat gloomy Romanesque with a lighter and more ornamental style[1] no doubt influenced Wigmore and his advisers—as well as a wish to insert great stained windows in the place of the comparatively small Romanesque windows, for it must be remembered what mighty advances the craft of artists in coloured glass had made since the Romanesque builders had finished their work. No doubt, too, the charming effect of Thokey's restoration of the south aisle inspired Wigmore with a longing to recast in a more ornate form the eastern limb of his great abbey.

All these motives received a decided impulse by a sudden and vast increase in the resources of the community which fell to the Benedictine house of Gloucester at this juncture.

Abbot Thokey, from the days of Edward I., had been acquainted, had possibly been intimate with, Prince Edward of Caernarvon, afterwards known as Edward II. That the royal house of England, from the days of Athel-

[1] We have already suggested that the desire to replace the stern, plain, somewhat gloomy and heavy "Romanesque" with a more ornate and lighter style, which was so usual a feature in the later half of the twelfth and following centuries, probably received its first impulse from the East. In the Crusades—those long drawn-out wars of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—it must be borne in mind, that enormous numbers of all classes and orders took part. These varied multitudes, in the course of their strange armed pilgrimages, visited many oriental lands. The contrast between the gorgeous Arabian and Saracenic architecture and the plain, severe Romanesque was very striking, and no doubt influenced many minds, and induced a desire to imitate in some degree the graceful and varied creations of the East. The wonderful development of the art of painting upon glass was another and most important factor in the yearning after a new fashion in architecture, in which larger windows affording greater scope to the craft of glass-painters might be introduced.

stan and the Anglo-Saxon dynasty, frequently made Gloucester their abode, is well known—probably from the time of Serlo and the rebuilding of much of the abbey and its dependencies, the King, during his stay at Gloucester, would have resided in the abbot's apartments in the Gloucester abbey.

It was in the abbot's dining-hall[1] that the famous conversation related in the History and Cartulary of the abbey took place. The chamber was adorned with pictures of the English kings. Prince Edward on one occasion asked, half in jest, Abbot Thokey if the monks would ever have his likeness among those of his ancestors. To Edward's question Thokey replied (was it a prophecy?) that he trusted to have him in a nobler place than in his dining-hall. The abbot's wish was strangely fulfilled, for only a few years afterwards the prince became king, and after the cruel murder in Berkeley Castle his mutilated body was reverently laid in the abbey church adjoining the abbot's lodgings, where the conversation above related was probably held.

Near what was once the high altar of the Benedictine abbey is a stately royal tomb, one of the fairest in England. Beneath an elaborately carved canopy of stone rests a sleep-

[1] Some of the abbot's apartments are still in existence. They have formed part of the present deanery since the suppression of the monastery in A.D. 1540. Much of the old Romanesque work on which Edward the Second must have gazed has been preserved, and generally the divisions of the old Norman rooms in which Thokey and his predecessors lived have been kept.—Some antiquarians of learning and ability have suggested that the mass of "Romanesque" adornment which still beautifies this interesting and historical building indicates that the apartments of the abbot of Gloucester were especially and elaborately decorated with the view of their being used by the Norman and Plantagenet sovereigns on the occasion of their frequent visits to Gloucester.

ing alabaster figure robed and crowned, with a winning and attractive face in its setting of long wavy hair. This is Edward II., the Plantagenet, the face not improbably moulded from a mask taken after death. Thokey's prophecy was strangely verified. The King's effigy hard by the high altar of the immemorial abbey has found verily a nobler resting-place than the dining-hall of the abbot. The pictures of Edward's royal ancestors on which he was looking when he asked Thokey his curious question have long disappeared, but after nigh six hundred years his alabaster effigy still rests on his strangely honoured tomb.

Strangely honoured, indeed, for it was the source of the abundant wealth which poured into the treasury of the Gloucester Abbey. After the King's murder at Berkeley the monasteries of Malmesbury, Kingswood, and Bristol, fearful of showing any honour or respect to the remains of the poor uncrowned Edward II., declined the perilous honour of receiving his remains. Thokey and the Benedictine house of Gloucester, less timorous, gave him an honoured grave. Thokey sent to Berkeley his own carriage, and brought the royal corpse to his stately abbey with every demonstration of respect. He received, indeed, for his brave, loyal act of friendship for the unhappy dead a right royal guerdon, for very soon the wheel of fortune turned, and the enemies of Edward II. gave place to the son of the murdered King. This son was the famous Edward III., whose pious care raised the fair tomb of which we have been speaking over his hapless father's place of sepulture.

But this was not all. Crowds of pilgrims, consisting of all sorts and conditions of men and women, came year after year to visit and pray over the Gloucester shrine where the remains of the murdered Edward rested, a

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

Tomb and Effigy of Edward II

curious and somewhat inexplicable cult indeed. It was perhaps the expression of a national sorrow for a king who had been shamefully done to death. Rich gifts were offered at the shrine, the donors thinking they would thus avert the curse which the foul deed of blood perhaps had brought upon their homes and hearths. The abbey grew suddenly wealthy with the countless pilgrim offerings. Out of this wealth[1] Wigmore determined to adorn and to beautify the eastern portion reserved for the monks of the great church where Edward lay. There is a tradition that the offerings were soon sufficient to rebuild, if the monks had so willed it, the entire abbey anew. But the Romanesque work was generally of too solid and enduring a character to allow of such a design. How could he best adorn the grey old abbey church without destroying or pulling down any portion?

The monk was often a great architect; those glorious sacred piles, many of which time and the more ruthless hand of man have spared, which we still wonder at and admire, mighty piles which grew up in so many centres of Europe between the closing years of the eleventh and the opening years of the sixteenth century, especially in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, were in great measure the fruit of the monk's hand and brain. The cloister life seems to have been peculiarly adapted to the architect's craft.

[1] Among the notable gifts given to the abbey at this time by distinguished persons, such as Edward III., Philippa his Queen, the Black Prince, the Queen of Scotland, and others, were a ship of solid gold, a costly gold cross, with a relic of the "True Cross" set in it, a necklace with an exceedingly precious ruby, a golden heart, and a number of valuable pieces of silver. Some of these gifts were redeemed by the donors, but some, with countless other treasures, disappeared, it is supposed, when the monastery was dissolved and confiscated by Henry VIII. in the year 1540.

For instance, the magnificent abbey church of Cluny was rebuilt on a far grander scale than the celebrated earlier abbey of S. Odilo, abbot of Cluny, A.D. 1094–A.D. 1049. This second abbatial church, constructed under the auspices of S. Hugh, abbot of the famous house, A.D. 1049–A.D. 1109, was designed by one of the Cluny monks, Gauzon, to whom, according to the Clunician legend, S. Peter revealed the design in a dream. The monk Gauzon's church was the vastest and most magnificent church in Western Christendom.

Abbot Wigmore, of Gloucester, was one of these great monk builders, and in the Benedictine abbey of S. Peter, Gloucester, the new architectural style was devised[1] between the years 1329 and 1335. Wigmore, with the apparently exhaustless offerings at the shrine of Edward II. in his hands, was resolved to transform and to recast the east limb of the abbey, not to rebuild it. He began the work in this south transept of which we are now writing and completed it in less than six years. In the south wall he replaced the original small Norman window or windows by a gigantic window. He raised the roof and covered the old Norman masonry in the interior of the transept with ornamental panel-work—panel-work which looks as though it were nailed on to the main body of the building. The result in this south transept "was work not quite fully developed Perpendicular, but so far advanced that it must be called Perpendicular, rather than any other style. All the essential features of the style are there, that especially English variety of the great Gothic family, which, whether for good or evil, effectually distinguishes

[1] Compare Professor Willis's words in his well-known Lecture, and Professor E. A. Freeman, Lecture ii., "Records of Gloucester Cathedral, 1883."

the architecture of our land from that of every other."[1] The south transept of Gloucester emphatically may be described as a nearly perfect example of Perpendicular, *and also as the first example which appeared in England.*

The same critical scholar, whose words we have been quoting, considers that in the device of Abbot Wigmore to decorate his Romanesque abbey we have the key to the origin of the Perpendicular style. The Gloucester architect had made up his mind not to destroy or to disturb the massive Romanesque walls and columns, save in the case of the window openings, the enlargement of which was part of his design. The new ornamental work was *to be thrown over the old work after the manner of a veil of lace;* veneered work, nailed on work, appliqué work, as some prefer more prosaically to term it.[2] And the series of straight lines in panelling and tracery lay more easily over the great round columns or heavy low-browed arches than would the more elegant carved lines and flowing tracery. What we find in the south transept of Gloucester we continue to find in the choir and north transept, where the work of transformation was proceeded with directly after the completion of the first division of the new work in the south transept, which we have termed the birthplace of the new architectural style. In the choir the long straight lines in the veil of stone tracery tossed over the Romanesque masonry were yet more necessary than in the smaller transept. The effect of this new and sterner Gothic ornamentation for the reasons above alluded to evidently pleased the English taste, and was adopted as *the* favourite style, even in

[1] E. A. Freeman.

[2] The manner in which this veil of Perpendicular tracery was thrown over the old Romanesque work is shown in a sketch which accompanies the history of the choir, p. 172.

places where the straight lines were not necessary for the overlaying work as at Gloucester, and so the new Perpendicular architecture, as it is generally termed, with slightly different varieties, became the universal use throughout England.

The rough dates of the first known beginnings of "Perpendicular" are as follows: Gloucester—*South Transept*, Abbot Wigmore, A.D. 1329–1336; *Choir*, Abbot de Staunton, A.D. 1337–1351. Winchester—*Nave*, Bishop Edington, A.D. 1345–1366 (continued by Bishop William of Wykeham, 1366–1404). Gloucester—*North Transept*, Abbot Horton, 1351–1377.

The North Transept,[1] corresponding nearly in size and general appearance to the South Transept, was covered in a similar manner by a veil of Perpendicular tracery by Abbot Horton after the transformation of the Choir had been completed, A.D. 1368–1373. The Perpendicular panelling here, though closely resembling the earlier work of Wigmore in the South Transept, is, as might have been expected, much more fully developed, the roof especially being richer. It contains traditionally the tombs of Abbot Horton and of his successor Abbot Boyfield. Two large and somewhat defaced stones mark the tombs in question. The brass-work which once enriched these great tablets has long disappeared, and the inscriptions have vanished likewise. The tablet to the North was probably that of Horton, under whose direction the Perpendicular casing or veil of this transept was carried out. The tablet to the south of Horton's probably covers the remains of Boyfield, who was abbot when Richard II. held his celebrated parliament at Gloucester.

[1] This North Transept is eight feet lower than that on the south side, two feet shorter and one foot less in width.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CHOIR

The "Choir," as we understand the term, belongs, comparatively speaking, to a late development of a Christian church. "Le Chœur," says Viollet-le-Duc, writing of the Cathedral of Chartres, "est l'objet principal, c'est pour lui que l'église est faite." "The history of mediæval ecclesiology," Mr. G. G. Scott is never weary of repeating in his essay on English Church Architecture, "may be almost summed up in one conception—the constant increase in length and in architectural importance, of the Eastern limb of that cruciform plan which all the larger churches exhibit. . . . The Choir, which had been originally a very subordinate feature, often even in large churches, as a distinct feature altogether wanting, had now, in the middle ages, come to be of the first importance, separated off in the most conspicuous manner from the body of the Church, and but slightly distinguished from the Sanctuary itself . . . in fact the ecclesiological history of the Middle Ages (roughly the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries) may almost be summed up in this one point, the development of the Choir."

The Christian Basilica, that adaptation of the old Pagan Basilica we have already dwelt upon is perhaps the earliest known type of a Christian Church, and dates from the

first quarter of the fourth century immediately after the peace of the church and the adoption of the religion of Jesus by the Roman Empire under the influence of the Emperor Constantine, A.D. 313. The primitive plan of a basilica included a simple nave with aisles, terminating in an apse, the floor of which was raised somewhat above the level of the pavement of the nave; just in front of the apse was placed the altar, in advance of the altar was a space generally reserved for the inferior orders of the clergy. This space was termed the "Chorus"; here were placed the singers, and others who made up the inferior orders; a low balustrade usually separated these from the ordinary worshippers who occupied the body of the nave. Another division or balustrade farther down the nave separated the catechumens and others who were not admitted to a participation in the more solemn rites. Close to the altar itself, in a small space known as the altarium, were the deacons and subdeacons; *beyond* the altar, in the apse, was a row of seats reserved for the presbyters—the presbyterium; in the centre of these, a raised seat was occupied by the bishop,[1] or the presiding presbyter.

Thus the "chorus" or choir in a primitive basilica was not by any means a prominent feature, and was only separated from the nave by a low balustrade. At a very early period this was enlarged by the portioning off the transepts at the end of the side aisles; this gave additional space to the singers and others more immediately engaged in the service. But these early transepts differed from the transepts of mediæval times. They were simply a

[1] This semicircular bench of Presbyters, at the head, so to speak, of the Church, suggests the idea of a "corona" (crown), from which some rather fancifully have derived the term "choir."

great cross-nave placed at right angles to the nave proper and its aisles, beyond which they rarely projected.[1] This arrangement is found in S. John's Lateran, Santa Maria Maggiore, and in S. Paul's-without-the-Walls.

In the accompanying little drawing the existing Church of S. Clement is a good illustration of one of these very early plans for the purposes of the choir or chorus and other ritual arrangements in a basilica; it shows the choir enclosure—low walls of white marble having a bench on their inner face, but the low walls in question do not obstruct in any way the view of the altar or the presbyterium in the apse. The present Church of S. Clement dates from the ninth century, but the plan and probably the fittings are of a much earlier date, probably of the first half of the sixth century. They certainly represent the tradition of a primitive Christian basilica. A further development in the size of the choir appears in certain of the singularly preserved churches in Syria, deserted at the period of the Mahommedan invasion. These churches were erected certainly before the end of the sixth century, and some of these belong undoubtedly to the latter end of the fourth and to the fifth century. There are examples among these of a considerable prolongation of the original choir arrangements in basilicas, a sanctuary of two bays being interposed between the apse and the nave.

In some basilicas, at a comparatively early date, the use of the apse was changed. It became no longer the recognised situation for the presbyters or for the presbyters and bishop, but was adapted as the sepulchre for the patron saint or for some specially holy remains. Beneath

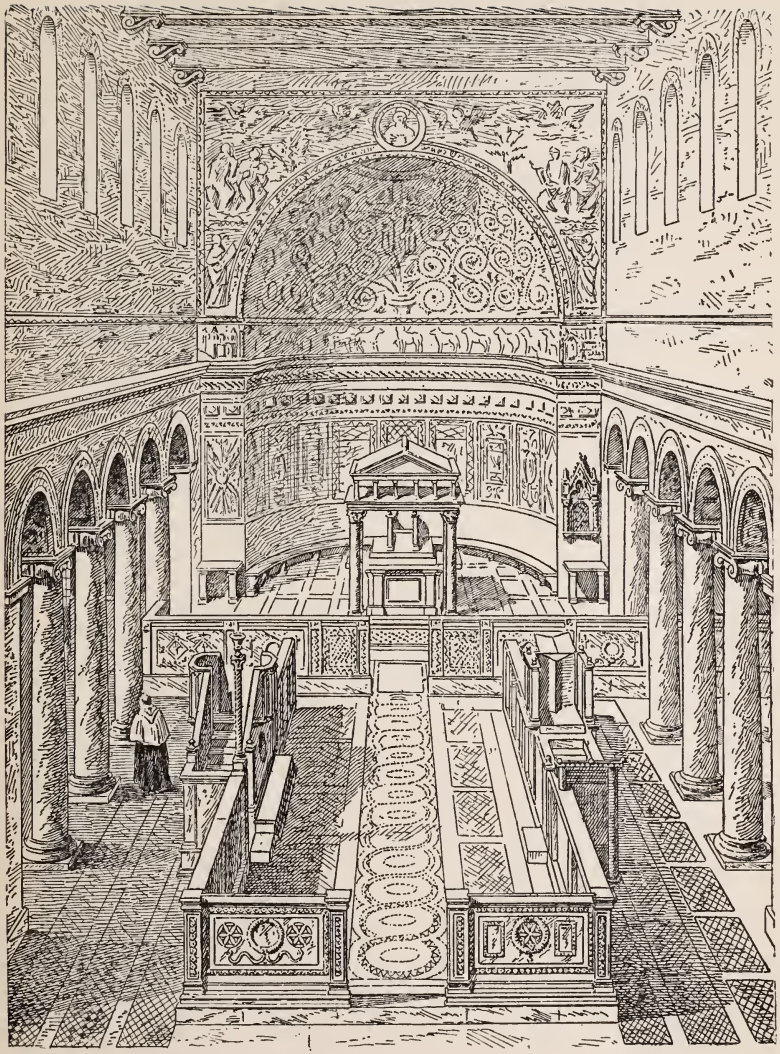
[1] This is shown in the little plan accompanying the chapter on the transept, p. 137.

the apse was dug a small crypt or vault (if it did not previously exist) where the body was laid, and in the apse was erected over the crypt a reliquary or monument. This, as we have noticed in a former chapter, was one of the earliest forms of the crypt, which subsequently became in certain important churches a prominent feature. This change in the original use of the apse was made in the primitive basilican Church of S. Martin at Tours, sometime before A.D. 500. During the time of the Carlovigian kings of France the practice which changed the original "presbyterium" into the "Martyrium" was not uncommon.[1]

Consequent upon such a change the seats there of the presbyters were moved into the "chorus" between the altar and the nave.

We have already dwelt at some length on the long period of disaster which fell on the countries of Christendom, in the East as in the West, during part of the seventh, all through the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. A slumber resembling death paralysed all Church progress and work, save during the brief period of the great Emperor Charlemagne's reign. (He was crowned emperor A.D. 800.) We are speaking in detail of the West. During this period, lasting over three hundred years, comparatively few churches were erected. But in the awakening of the eleventh century a new era dawned upon the Church. This renaissance of the Church, we must remember, was largely, indeed almost entirely, monastic. It was mostly the work of the abbey of Cluny and of its daughter houses.

[1] See Quicherat, "Fragments d'un Cours Archéologique," p. 409; and "Restitution de la Basilique de S. Martin de Tours," p. 40, in the "Mélanges" (Quicherat).



Basilica of S. Clement, Rome.

The White Robe of Churches

The "white robe of churches," to use the metaphor we have adopted from the Cluny monk, Raoul Glaber, with which in that age of awakening, Christendom vested itself, were for the most part "monastic" churches, or at least churches designed and built under monastic inspiration. The Benedictines were without doubt the architects of the great multitude of abbeys, cathedrals, and humble parish churches which arose in such vast numbers at this period in every country of Europe. Naturally their plans and designs for their own churches were drawn to suit the needs of their communities, and other churches, great and small, more or less followed the new fashion brought in by the all-powerful monks. At once the old basilican arrangement was changed and modified to suit monastic needs and requirements. The most important of these eleventh-century changes was the new position of paramount importance given to the choir[1] in the Church, a position that grew in importance as the period known in history as the "mediæval" advanced.

In dwelling upon this marked feature in all mediæval church building and church arrangements—the striking development in the choir—it must be remembered that there was one period during which the Church, especially in Royal France, pursued a different policy to the one which found its expression in the glorification of the choir. In this especial study on the "choir," it will be well to add a few details to our former notice on pages 122–128 on this subject.

The great religious reaction of the eleventh and twelfth centuries was the work of the religious orders. It was *the monastery* which set itself to reform and to infuse fresh

[1] Compare *De Caumont*, "Abécédaire d'Archéologie, Architecture Religieuse," chap. ii.

life into the Church at a period when life was well-nigh extinct. Well and thoroughly, after its light, the monastery did its work. It sent a new vivifying breath through every department of human effort. The soldier and the merchant, the noble and the peasant alike, were influenced more or less by the new spirit which Cluny and innumerable religious houses—a large number of which were daughter houses of Cluny—had called into existence. The new and nobler thoughts and aspirations suggested by the "monk" of the eleventh century permeated all art, including architecture, painting (especially on glass), sculpture, and the scanty literature of the age. Agriculture, commerce, even war, passed under and were coloured by monastic influences. Nor can any fair critic decline to acknowledge the enormous services rendered by the "monk" to society in this stern iron age. Things were indeed evil, more evil, perhaps, in the ninth and tenth centuries than at any period of the world's story that we can accurately gauge. Under purely monastic influences there was a marked and decisive change for the better in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but as the twelfth century was drawing to a close, the "monk's" great work was virtually done. The conditions of the Western world, in France, Italy, Germany, and England, were altered. We have dwelt briefly already on some of these conditions, such as on the growth of cities and of city life, the comparative security from foreign raids of barbarian peoples, the consolidation of the monarchical authority, the increasing discontent with the oppression and exactions of the feudal system.

But although many of the conditions of life were changing, the religious spirit, awakened some 150 or 200 years before by the splendid efforts of the monastics

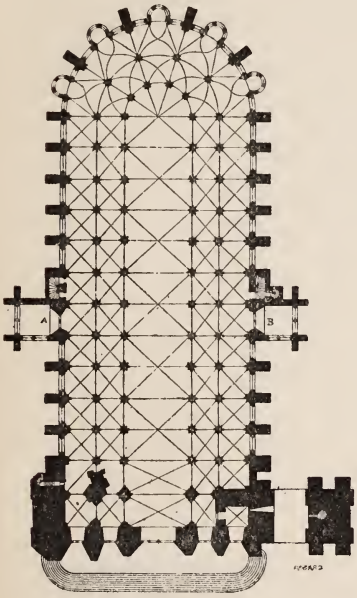
still quickened and inspired all sorts and conditions of men. The bishops, however, whose authority and power were gravely impaired by the enormous influence of the monastic orders, for a time directed the religious spirit into a somewhat new channel. Under their prompting, the zeal of the rising *civic* communities commenced the building of the mighty mediæval cathedrals. France is especially alluded to here, and in France especially that portion of that great country more immediately under the sphere of royal influence, though the same work went on in a somewhat lesser degree in other European countries.

Roughly, in monarchical France, some twenty-two or more of these stupendous cathedrals[1] were designed and largely completed in this period. They were generally in the first instance arranged as vast religious halls or assembling places for the people. At first they were designed and built with no transepts, or with very small transepts, with few if any side chapels—at most with only a few small chapels leading out of the apse—and what in this place is especially to be noted, *with no permanently enclosed choir*, with nothing to intercept or block the view save the high altar, with its curtains, the choir being simply carpeted and provided with seats for the clergy, enriched, apparently, with hangings at the back or with curtains removable at pleasure.

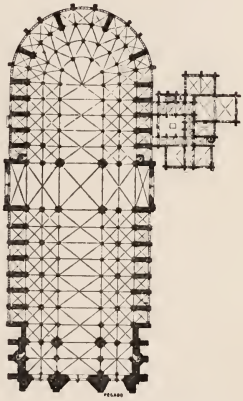
But what is especially remarkable, this state of things only lasted a comparatively speaking short time—less

[1] The names of these magnificent and in many cases stupendous cathedrals which are still with us, startling us with their amazing size and often perfect beauty, after nigh six centuries, are Paris, Chartres, Bourges, Noyon, Laon, Soissons, Meaux, Amiens, Arras, Cambrai, Rouen, Séez, Bayeux, Coutances, le Mans, Angers, Poitiers, Tours, Reims, Sens, Chalons, Troyes. These, of course, vary somewhat in size, but they are all important.

than a century. Not one of these cathedrals appears to have been completely finished after the original design. The mediæval architect, the master of the works, and his men worked slowly and with care, for they bestowed immense pains on each separate detail. The enormous



Ground Plan of the Cathedral of Paris.



Ground Plan of the Cathedral of Bourges.

piles, too, required the expenditure of vast sums, and even when the cities were rich and resources comparatively abundant, which was not by any means always the case, the outlay had to be spread over a long period. Before any of these splendid cathedrals of which we have been speaking were out of the workmen and architect's

hands, a change had passed over the designs and plans of the men who were the guides and leaders of the Church, and the desire closely to identify the cathedral with the people had passed away, and the old spirit of exclusiveness again took possession of the clergy.

In the last years of the thirteenth century the "choir" began again to be enclosed. The transepts were gradually enlarged, side chapels and apsidal chapels and enclosed altars were multiplied, and the cathedrals were eventually finished much in the form in which they have come down to us. The great open buildings designed exclusively for the use of the people, with the unenclosed "choir," must be regarded as a curious parenthesis in the story of these mighty mediæval houses of prayer. Henceforth, roughly, from the end of the thirteenth century downwards, there was no marked difference in the general arrangements of the interior of the monastic abbey and the cathedral. In both we find the "choir" *enclosed* and reserved for the monks, the canons, and the officiating clergy, and as time advanced the *enclosure* of the "choir," usually the most elaborately decorated and the most important portion of the building, became more and more a pronounced and conspicuous feature.

Nor is it difficult to see the reason for this marked change, the great feature of all mediæval abbeys and churches. It took its rise naturally in the extraordinary growth of the monastic system in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In the basilican church the choir was simply a small enclosure designed for the use of the clerks, the singers, and others engaged in the services, and was scarcely separated from the nave where the faithful assembled; but a position so unimportant and arrangements so simple did not at all correspond with the requirements

of a monastic community. The monks, bound as they were to an elaborate round of daily and nightly round of choral offices, required for these frequent services an altar or altars of their own, and lofty screens round their choir where they might sing and say their many offices uninterrupted. It even appeared as though they considered the worship of the people as a matter of lesser importance. Still provision was carefully made for the worship of the people by the erection of separate altars in the nave, where regular and special services were said and sung. All this explains the expansion of the corresponding small basilican apse, and the simple basilican arrangements for the singers and others engaged in the services, into the vast choir and elongated sanctuary end which we have dwelt upon as *the* striking feature in all church architecture of the Middle Ages.

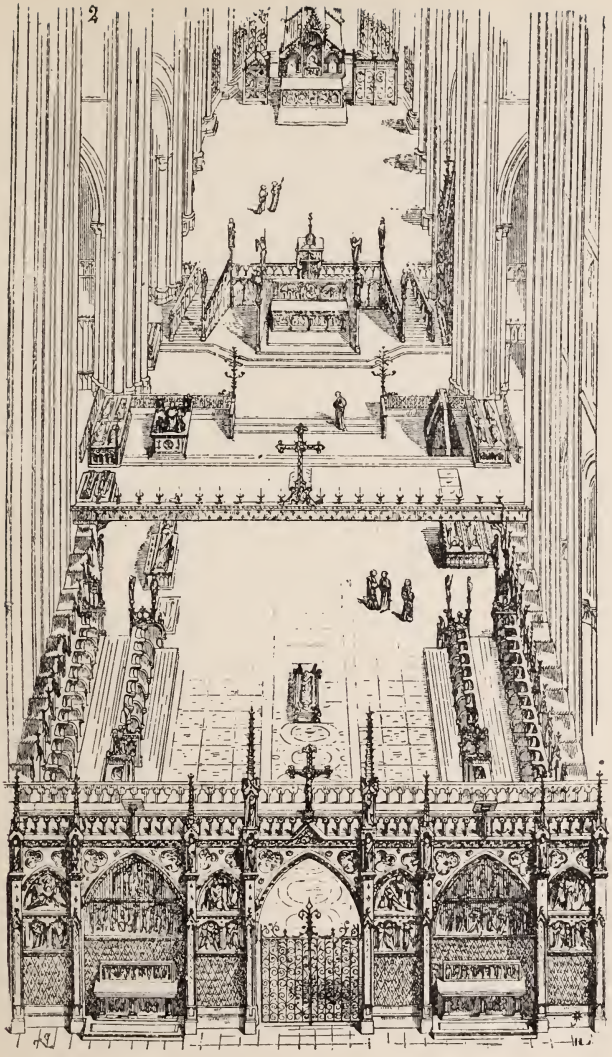
As might be expected, the smaller parish churches, of course in a lesser degree, followed the prevailing fashion, and a choir, completely separated from the nave, commonly by a rood screen, became the usual plan of a parish church.

The following brief sketch of a great mediæval choir in the early part of the fourteenth century will serve as a general picture of most of abbatial and, indeed, cathedral choirs of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It represents the enclosed and reserved portion of an important church during most of the mediæval period.

To the west, separating the choir from the nave, was erected the screen (Rood screen, Jubé) already described, with its door in the centre, with its two "people's" altars, one at either side, surmounted with a lofty crucifix, and often with accompanying statues near the foot of the

cross; a broad platform above contained generally an altar and two reading-desks, one on either side, whence on certain occasions the priest read to the people in the nave. The screen was, as a rule, of stone richly carved, coloured, and gilt. Stone walls about 15 feet in height, also adorned with sculptured figures in gold and colour, served as a back to the stalls, often some sixty or more in number. The stalls were usually elaborately carved and decorated, and were in some cases adorned with rich hangings behind. Above the stalls eastward, in the midst of the choir in an abbatial church, the custom was to place an altar termed the matutinal altar. At the matutinal altar the ordinary morning office was said in monastic churches. In the abbey Church of S. Denis, near Paris, one of the most sumptuous churches in France, this matutinal altar was dedicated to the blessed Trinity. At S. Denis, immediately behind this "Trinity" altar, was the magnificent shrine of S. Louis. Still farther eastward in the same church which we have taken as an example, raised yet higher, was the principal altar; behind it towered a yet more gorgeous shrine containing the sacred relics of the apostles of France, SS. Denis the Areopagite, Rusticus, and Eleutherus. In very many of the great churches and abbeys the enclosure round the choir, in part or in whole, was formed by the tombs of abbots, priors, bishops, or royal personages, whose remains had been laid to rest in the choir with which in life they had been connected by official or other special ties.

The choir arrangement of the cathedrals of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries closely resemble those above detailed in a great abbey, save that the matutinal altar seems especially to have been a favourite feature in a monastic abbey. In the case of the parish churches the



Church of S. Denis (near Paris), showing the Plan and Fittings of a Great Choir.

same plan, though on a smaller and less pretentious scale, was usually followed.

In modern times, especially in the cathedrals of France and in other continental countries, the taste of the seventeenth and two following centuries has often removed these choir enclosures in whole or in part, and replaced the beautiful and interesting mediæval work by what Viollet-le-Duc does not hesitate to call "des boiseries sans valeur avec des grilles d'un aspect miserable." The well-known choir of the stately cathedral of Reims, partly wrecked in this sad fashion, is a familiar example. In England another strange attempt has been made to improve upon the original design of the great mediæval artists. While as a rule the original plan of the choir, as far as was possible with the changed conditions of worship in the Anglican communion, has been reverently and skilfully preserved, in some great cathedrals and abbey churches the screen separating the choir from the nave has been taken away. The effect, as may be conceived, is not happy, while in a congregational point of view the change is well-nigh useless, if not positively harmful: well-known examples of this singular attempt to improve upon the masterpieces of the great mediævalists are the cathedrals of Worcester and Hereford.[1] Westminster Abbey and Gloucester, on the other hand, are good instances of a rigid conservation of the ancient design.

From the general history of the peculiar mediæval

[1] In Hereford, where the choir screen has been cleared away, an open-worked iron grille has been substituted, in its way a fine work of art. But the old division of choir and nave has been completely destroyed. As might have been expected, for all congregational purposes, save as affording seats for the singing men and the canons, who are thus separated from the ordinary worshippers, the choir, which is of considerable size, is virtually useless.

development of the choir—a marked feature in mediæval church architecture—we turn to the choir of the cathedral church of Gloucester, which is our typical example of a great abbey built in the period of the awakening of the Church of the West in the later years of the eleventh century.

The choir of Gloucester, of vast dimensions, is an admirable instance of a completely enclosed choir of a great abbey church, and in its general features fortunately has remained unchanged since its curious architectural transformation by the abbots in the first half of the fourteenth century. The enclosure of the "choir" of Gloucester comprehended:—

(1) The Sanctuary, in which stood the *High Altar*, placed in the apse with its raised platform and flight of steps.

(2) The space termed the *Presbytery*, at the West end of which probably stood the matutinal altar, with its flight of three steps; of these two spaces the high-altar platform and the presbytery, both elevated, are raised over the crypt beneath. The highest portion, the platform on which stands the high altar, covers what answers to the martyrium or tomb of the patron saint of the church. There is, however, in Gloucester no tradition of any such tomb, but *the fashion* is carefully preserved. The presbytery is raised also, but is on a lower level than the high-altar platform, and is immediately over the large crypt beneath.

(3) Below the presbytery at the bottom of the three steps above mentioned comes the ritual choir, the "choir" proper, with its sixty stalls, twenty-five on either side, and ten at the lower end, five on either side the doorway of the screen separating the choir from the nave.

These ten are termed Return stalls. The present screen, with its broad platform on the top, on which stand the two organs (the choir and nave organs) with their vast forest of pipes, corresponds to the mediæval platform, gallery or loft, and occupies the same position as did the old rood-screen[1] which contained an altar, a pair of small organs, and two desks from which on certain days the Epistle and Gospel were read to the congregation assembled in the nave.[2]

The "choir" above described, including the sacrarium or high-altar platform, the presbytery platform, the ritual choir, and the loft or gallery over the screen dividing the choir from the nave, is thrust forward past the transept into the nave, in which it occupies a considerable space, its entire length being nearly the length of the nave itself.

The wall or screen-work of this vast choir enclosure is composed on the *western* end by the stone screen, with the ten Return stalls looking up the choir, above described, which part it from the nave. On the *north* side, it is composed of twenty-five stalls with their canopies surmounted by an elaborately carved cornice, these stalls being partly backed up with the stone-work

[1] In continuation of the line of this rood-screen, which was of stone, were stone screens in both aisles; in front of both of which were probably altars enclosed by screens to form a chapel. All this would have formed a grand architectural façade, a very imposing division between the nave and choir.

[2] Some antiquarian scholars believe that a *second screen*, all traces of which, however, have disappeared, stood farther down the nave between the second pair of the great nave piers, and that on this was the gallery called the rood-loft from its containing the great rood and its attendant images. They consider that the rood itself in Gloucester stood on a rood beam at some height above the loft, as traces seem still to exist of this rood beam in the pillars or shafts.

of the great shafts supporting the Tower. Farther to the eastward, on the north side, the enclosure is composed mainly of three great monumental tombs; two of these tombs contain the remains of kings, and the third of them the remains of the last abbot of the old Benedictine house.

On the south side the enclosure is composed of twenty-five stalls, backed in a similar way to those on the north; and farther to the eastward, by stone-work partly of panelled and partly of open tracery, and at the eastern-most portion by a group of solid stone sedilia with canopies. At the east end the enclosure is formed by the holy table or altar, the reredos, and the stone chamber termed in Gloucester the Feretory.

All this choir-enclosure remains practically undisturbed, save that the rood-loft itself contains now only the immense organ of later days. The rood, the images, and the altars, &c., have long disappeared.

It would be difficult to find a more perfect instance than "Gloucester" of a great mediæval choir completely enclosed, and arranged for the use of an important Benedictine house. A striking contrast indeed does this vast choir, the special outcome of church life in the middle ages, shut in by lofty stone walls and tall canopied stalls and stately tombs, present to the comparatively small choir of a lordly basilica of the earlier centuries. The basilica, for instance, would show us a choir of comparatively small dimensions, marked out with a low wall of balustrades, but scarcely distinguishable from the basilican nave, which virtually occupied the whole of the ground floor of the building. And the choir of the Gloucester abbey of Benedictines, above described with some detail, is a typical instance of the choir arrangements of a great mediæval

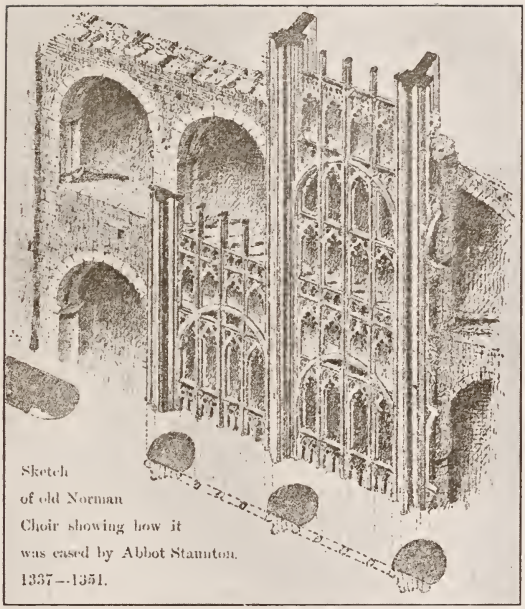
abbey, an arrangement closely followed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in most cathedral [1] and abbatial churches, and imitated more or less in the larger parish churches. Truly we are accurate in describing the enlarged and developed "choir" as the principal mediæval feature in church architecture.

Before quitting the subject of the mediæval choir, we will add a few details on the special architectural features of the choir of Gloucester, which we have selected as the groundwork of this little study of a great mediæval church. A peculiar importance besides belongs to Gloucester, as it is in this famous abbey that was first introduced that form of Gothic architecture "the Perpendicular," which the English people, from the middle of the fourteenth century onwards, adopted as their own, and continued to use for nearly two hundred years.

We have already, in our chapter on the "transept," described the first introduction of Perpendicular architecture in the south transept of the abbey of Gloucester in the years 1327–1335.

The successful work in the south transept of the abbey determined the abbot of the Benedictine house to proceed with the work of the transformation of the eastern limb

[1] Various differences in detail are, of course, noticeable. Sometimes, in the case of churches having a double transept, the existence of the *upper* transept obviated the necessity of shutting off the *lower* transept from the nave or people's part of the church. Sometimes the great length of the upper arm of the cross provided ample space for the canons and for the various members of collegiate bodies in cathedrals, and for monks and religious of varied degrees in abbatial churches. A glance, however, at the ground-plans of the great majority of the cathedrals, abbeys, and more important churches built in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries will show that, as a rule, "the choir" enclosure in the various divisions of sanctuary, presbytery, ritual choir, occupies as a rule at least the half of the entire building.



View of the Veil of Perpendicular Tracery
in the Choir of Gloucester Cathedral

of his great church. The flow of contributions from the pilgrims to the shrine of Edward II. continued for many years without abatement, thus providing an ample source of means to defray the expense of the costly work. Abbot Wygmore, under whom the curious "overlaying" and other changes in the south transept were carried out, was succeeded by Abbot Stanton, who also may be fairly described as another great building abbot, one of that school of architects for which Gloucester in this age was especially famous. He resolved to undertake at once a bolder and more daring work, much on the same lines, and chose the choir as its scene.

The transformation work by Abbot Stanton in the choir is one of the most singular ever undertaken even by the daring and deviceful mediæval monk-architects. Standing in either of the transepts of Gloucester, at the eastern ends of these cross arms, and looking eastwards, a vista of mighty round Romanesque shafts of enormous thickness and bulk, with vast low-browed arches, meet the view—shafts and arches, be it remembered, quite different from the shafts and arches of Serlo which we have described in our picture of the nave, we think that these belong to a somewhat earlier date than Serlo's. These massive, somewhat dumpy shafts and low-browed, heavy arches form the distinguishing features of the wide ambulatory which encircles the whole of the eastern or upper portion of the enclosure of the choir, including the sanctuary and presbytery, and a small part of the ritual choir. It is in style purely Romanesque, and decidedly very early Romanesque. Some of us believe that this part of the great church belongs to the building work carried on by the men of Edward the Confessor's time, and which was interrupted for some years by the troubles consequent upon

the Norman Conquest, until Serlo in 1087 took up the work again, and completed the abbey by building the nave and remaining part of the pile before described.

Ascending the steps which lead from the transept into this impressive though somewhat gloomy and heavy Romanesque ambulatory, and passing through the stone archway-entrance which, at the top of the flight of steps leads from the ambulatory into the choir, we find ourselves at once in another world of thought. Over the great and massive Romanesque columns of which we have just been speaking, over another tier of similar shafts and arches built above the ambulatory, appears to have been dropped a mighty veil of curious tracery in stone. It has been well described by a great master of architecture thus: "As we enter the choir of Gloucester we feel there is something singular about it. The effect is like that of a single-bodied building, a gigantic college chapel, a church like the cathedral of Alby, in the south of France, without aisles. It is not till we look a little more narrowly that we find that the greater part of the 'Romanesque' building is still there, not rebuilt, not even disguised, but simply hidden behind a veil of perpendicular lacework. . . . At Gloucester the later work, without destroying the elder, altogether obscures it, and decides the general effect of the building."[1] Another famous architectural critic, commenting upon this peculiar and magnificent choir at Gloucester, tells us how in all cathedrals he observes a screen, about the height of the present altar screen (some 15 feet high), which separates the choir from the ambulatory (or side aisles), but in this cathedral the screen is carried to the soaring roof, and the result was a beautiful, if not a unique, choir. The screen of

[1] E. A. Freeman.

tracery which formed the sides was *plastered* — so to speak—on the Norman walls[1] from floor or pavement to the roof."

Between A.D. 1335 and 1350, Abbot Stanton carried on his strange beautiful work of transforming the Romanesque choir into a Perpendicular building. The old vaulted roof was raised higher than any choir roof in England, save in the case of Westminster and York. A mighty window — men say the largest window in the world — filled up the place where the old Romanesque gloomy apse once closed the sombre vista of vast Romanesque columns and low-browed arches. The glass of this enormous window was exquisitely coloured, and a flood of jewelled light passed in, and lit up, with a new and beautiful light,[2] the glorious transformed choir and its veil of sculptured stone.

This mighty window, or rather vast wall of glass, was a curious change from the small Romanesque windows which lit up the old apse and choir. Something of the kind had been already carried out on a smaller scale in the transformation of the south transept, where a great new window had been inserted in the south wall, but Abbot Stanton in his remodelled choir exaggerated the south transept window. As it has been well said, "He would have a window beyond all windows," and was not content with simply filling up the whole of the new east end with gorgeously stained glass, but he determined it should be so great that he constructed something exactly opposite to an apse at the east end with slanting sides,

[1] Professor Willis.

[2] A row of large windows on the north and south, contrived in the upper storey, all richly coloured, were also inserted in the upper portion of the new veil of stone tracery. The choir was thus brilliantly and effectively lit with jewelled light in every part.

but sides that slant *outwards* instead of inwards, and thus his window was larger than the choir of which it was the finish. This taste for enormous windows became a peculiarly English feature. The Gloucester window, with its startling dimensions, was often reproduced in the new Perpendicular style, notably at York and Carlisle. Indeed, in the first named of these, the choir window is only very slightly smaller than the famous Gloucester original.

The vaulting of this transformed choir is a work of extraordinary magnificence.[1] It is covered with a vast network of liernes,[2] cutting it into an infinity of panels, whose angles are marked by a perfect army of carved bosses. Over the sanctuary the vaulting is specially enriched with carvings representing our Lord in glory, surrounded by angels adoring.

This elaborate and beautiful style of ceiling, at no distant period from the one of which we are writing (the middle of the fourteenth century), was developed into the still richer and more fanciful variety of vaulting which became an especial characteristic of later Perpendicular architecture, and which was termed Fan-vaulting. This development of the fan-vault, too, was an invention of the great Gloucester school of masons, as the earliest specimen of fan-vaulting is found in the stately cloisters of this abbey presently to be described.

It is interesting to note that the fashion which adopted

[1] So Sir Gilbert Scott, *Royal Academy Lectures*, xv., who describes this marvel of elaborate work with some detail.

[2] *Liernes* are small ribs which cross from one boss or intersection of the principal ribs to another. The term was originally used by Philibert de l'Orme. The word signifies in carpentry a short joist or rail serving as a tie to steady other timbers, which fits in with its use real or apparent in vaulting.

the extraordinary magnificence of the roof of the Gothic church was parallel to the change by which the elaborate flowing tracery was converted into the severe and comparatively plain Perpendicular. Both the severe and less ornate Perpendicular and the beautiful fan-vaulting seem to have been due to the school of monk-architects of the famous Benedictine house of Gloucester. It would seem that the new rich vaulting was intended by these great and skilful artists as in some manner a correction to the perhaps over-plain and simple perpendicular straight lines, the characteristic feature of this style of architecture. Curiously enough they appeared together, and both in the Gloucester abbey. The vaulting of the south transept of the abbey, the birthplace of the Perpendicular style, is a beautiful and admirably constructed piece of work. The roof of the choir, the next piece of Perpendicular work, shows a great and striking advance upon the roof of the south transept, and is, as it has been described, "a work of extraordinary magnificence." The fan-vaulting of the cloister, undertaken only a few years after the completion of the choir, is another step in advance, and has never been surpassed. These successive developments in vaulting quickly suceeeded each other, and all are dated between the years 1327 and the last years of the century, the fourteenth.

The transformation of the north transept was proceeded with shortly after the completion of the transformation of the choir. The work, with some differences in detail from the work in the south transept, was carried out by Abbot Horton between A.D. 1368 and A.D. 1373.

Among the more interesting of these differences, is the introduction of bosses in the vaulting where the ribs intersect one another.

In the south transept there are no bosses; in the north transept they have been introduced. It required no little skill to complete a vault such as that of the south transept without the covering protection of bosses, which were introduced for this purpose.

After the Reformation for a long period the exceeding beauty of the choir of Gloucester was comparatively ignored. In the days when Laud (afterwards archbishop) was Dean of Gloucester, the abbey, then a cathedral, was, it is stated, in a more ruinous condition than almost any church of the same class in England; this was in the year 1616. As time advanced, it seems, in common with other marvels of mediæval Gothic architecture, to have passed more and more into popular disfavour. Sir Christopher Wren, the first really eminent English church architect who had arisen since the Reformation, was curiously hostile to all mediæval schools of Gothic architecture, and the builder of S. Paul's, London, even ventured to term the magnificent Gothic cathedrals of the Middle Ages "vast and gigantic buildings indeed, but not worthy the name of architecture." And popular opinion seems to have endorsed to the full the estimate of Charles II.'s famous architect, for we find Evelyn, whose well-known diary with fair accuracy reflects public opinion at this period, speaks of these mediæval buildings as "congestions of heavy, dark, melancholy, and monkish piles, without any proportion, use, or beauty." Sir Henry Wotton, to whose "Parallels of Ancient and Modern Architecture" Evelyn penned a dedicatory epistle, writes of "the natural imbecility and very uncomeliness of pointed arches." They ought, he thinks, "to be banished from judicious eyes among the reliques of a barbarous age."

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

The Choir, looking East

Milton, with his well-known solemn and beautiful lines on a Gothic minster-church in "Il Penseroso," was some two hundred years in advance of the modern revival of admiration for Gothic architecture.

But in the last forty years of the nineteenth century, men, scholarly and devout, have come to see that no school of church building was so adapted for public Christian worship when carried out with dignity and reverence as the Gothic. With the reawakened love for the architecture of the beautiful pre-Reformation churches and abbeys, have arisen a group of distinguished men,[1] the like of which had not appeared among us for nigh three hundred years, whose costly and careful work in these churches has for the most part been confined mainly to a strictly conservative restoration of what they found, but which, alas, was gradually perishing owing to the ravages of time and neglect. Among these splendid remains of the creations of mediæval genius the choir of Gloucester, on which we have been dwelling, in the opinion of many of our most accurate critics, holds a high and commanding place. And the careful and scholarly judgment of the men of the last decades of the nineteenth century, which places the wonderful choir of Gloucester as one of, some think, the first of all the stately and imposing "interiors" of English cathedrals, was no doubt the opinion of the men of the middle and later years of the fourteenth century. The impression of the Perpendicular choir of Gloucester upon the minds and hearts of those who in the middle of the fourteenth century gazed upon it in the first freshness of its beauty, lit up with the soft jewelled

[1] I would instance such names as *Pugin* and *Street*, *Sir Gilbert Scott* and *Pearson*, for these distinguished scholarly architects have already passed away.

light of the new great windows, no doubt contributed in no small degree to the popularity of the new departure in Gothic architecture which so rapidly, after its first appearance, was adopted in all parts of England as the popular style. For it is no exaggeration which speaks of "Perpendicular" as being, in the later part of the fourteenth and all through the fifteenth centuries, the national architecture of our people.

One of the chief characteristics and principal beauties of the marvellous choir we have been describing is the great east window, inserted as we have said by the Perpendicular builders under Abbot Stanton in the transformation of the choir, A.D. 1337–1351. We will now tell the story of the introduction and the invention of stained glass, the principal and most conspicuous of the enrichments of a mediæval church, especially dwelling on the glass of the great east window of Gloucester, one of the noblest specimens in England which has been preserved to us of this beautiful and exquisite art so dear to our fathers.

CHAPTER XX

STAINED GLASS

The Cathedral of Gloucester, which we have taken as our typical instance of a great Romanesque abbey of the eleventh century, and which as the centuries passed assumed in its eastern portions the beautiful aspect of a noble Gothic minster, although, among its many treasures, it possesses no great hoard of mediæval glass like Chartres, or Nôtre Dame of Paris, or the cathedrals of Reims and Bourges, to take familiar French examples, nor can it for an instant compare with English York or Canterbury in their wealth of ancient windows, still Gloucester boasts, among many precious fragments of stained glass,[1] two magnificent windows entirely of ancient date, one of which is the largest window in England, possibly in the world, and as an example of its school is simply unrivalled. Before describing it, we will glance through the story of stained and painted glass, which in the great mediæval building ages was emphatically the chiefest and most effective of the decorations with which our fore-

[1] Notably in the two upper east windows of the south transept, where the beautiful decorated glass of about 1330 is almost perfect. In the third and fifth windows of the north aisle are many ancient pieces of glass. Fragments are also found in the clerestory windows of the choir, north side, and in the west window of the choir. Most of the Lady Chapel windows contain the old canopies of glass. The east window of the Lady Chapel contains much of the original glass, but mingled with it are many ancient fragments of other stained windows.

fathers loved to adorn their glorious and matchless homes of prayer and praise.

The exquisite art, as we shall see, was in its infancy when, in the eleventh century, the Church of the West awoke from its long slumber. At first the comparatively little windows of the Romanesque builders gave little scope to the artists of the new craft. Before the twelfth century had quite run its course, a new school of builders were devising new and more ornate architectural forms, which gradually superseded the more austere taste of the Romanesque architects of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Among these new forms, the *window* and its tracery, more or less elaborate, assumed larger and ever larger proportions, and the new "Gothic" fashion of admitting more and ever more light into the churches provided a wider field for the skill and ingenuity of the craft of painters on glass. Through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the windows, ever increasing in size and beauty, gradually became perhaps the most prominent feature of "Gothic" church ornamentation.

The mediæval worshippers loved colour with a strange but not an unreasonable passion. Men marvel somewhat whence this passion came to them, till they remember how probable it was that the returning bands of Crusaders brought this taste, in the first instance, back from Eastern lands. The churches became literally a blaze of colours. The flat wooden ceilings which preceded the general adoption of the groined stone vault were more or less elaborately painted. The floors were largely tiled with tawny reds. The pillars were enriched with strange fantastic patterns. The many altars were literally ablaze with colour and with gold, and the comparatively new art of jewelled translucent glass was

eagerly adopted, and generally introduced to fill in the windows, which were constructed as time went on on a larger and ever larger scale. The only light which penetrated these shrines of devotion came in through panels of transparent sapphire and gleaming ruby, while more rarely it filtrated through a glass mosaic of pale green, white, or yellow.

The abbey, in the early mediæval ages, was somewhat dark and sombre, for "the first coloured windows were intense in colour, rich, and even heavy. The note they struck was deep, solemn, suited to the church and the times. Neither priest nor parishioner was afraid to sacrifice a certain amount of light. It was the business of an early window to shut in those that worshipped from the outer world, and to wrap them in mysterious, beautiful gloom. With other days, however, came other ideals. As time went on, the problem of the artist was how more and more to lighten the glass, until at last white glass predominated, and the question was how to introduce colour into it."[1] Thus a great change gradually passed over the fashion of glass-painting, for during the early period, everything in these fair jewelled windows had been sacrificed to colour; the glass artist strove, and often with rare success, after colour harmony, and in early glass the most fantastic combinations of tints appear in the gorgeous Jesse-trees, in the stately rows of prophets and kings, of saints and martyrs, who look down on the long dark aisles and solemn naves and choirs of the great churches of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

[1] Lewis Day, "Windows," 1898. English students of lore relating to the beautiful craft of glass-stainers owe a great debt to this scholarly book, where the story of the art they love is traced with considerable detail from its beginning.

The White Robe of Churches

We have styled it a *new craft*, this art of filling windows with translucent pictured glass stained with all the colours of the rainbow, and rightly, for no age as yet had dreamed of the novel beautiful adornment. There was nothing of the kind in the more stately buildings of Egypt, Greece, or Rome.

In Southern lands there was comparatively little need of windows. The people in those favoured climates lived largely out of doors. In ordinary dwellings the windows were small and few. In great public buildings, such as the temples and the baths, the openings which admitted light and air were for the most part at a great height, and were certainly never glazed. No vestiges of coloured glass have ever been discovered in those great piles erected in "classical" times. Not that *glass* was unknown, for scarabs of glass, and beads of glass coloured to imitate the ruby, the emerald, and the sapphire are found in the oldest Egyptian tombs, dating from a period long anterior to the Christian era.

Gradually, as we search through the early records of the Christian centuries, we come upon allusions which tell us how men were, as it were, feeling their way slowly towards the new art. As early as the second half of the sixth century of our era, *Gregory of Tours* speaks of the coloured-glass windows in Christian basilicas—glass most probably tinted with various hues. Our own *Benedict Biscop*, the great artist-monk in the later years of the seventh century, brought skilful craftsmen in glass, in the year 680, to work at his monastery of Wearmouth, and *Wilfrid of York* we know put up tinted windows in his cathedral in A.D. 709. *Hincmar*, Archbishop of Reims, in A.D. 845, enriched his new cathedral with similar coloured windows. These instances might possibly be multiplied.

We have called these early windows tinted, for glass enriched with coloured figures only appears in the age which followed the death of the Emperor Charlemagne, A.D. 814. There is an anonymous writer of the age of the famous Western emperor who has left us a treatise specially dwelling upon colouring and even gilding glass, but he makes no allusion whatever to painting figures or subjects. It was evidently as yet an unknown art.

But after that date it made its appearance. We find mentions, rare it is true, but still unmistakable allusions to pictures upon glass, as, for instance, in the year 969 in the great cathedral at Reims. Late in the ninth or early in the tenth century, we place the real beginning of the art.

The earliest windows of painted "figure" glass of which we have any knowledge, appear to have been placed in the abbatial church of S. Benignus at Dijon. But such windows in the ninth century were very small and narrow.

Not a fragment, however, of such early glass, dating from the middle years of the ninth century, or even of the tenth, remains. Nor have we any of the eleventh century save certain doubtful pieces of great antiquity at Hildesheim in Hanover, and at Tegernsee in Bavaria, A.D. 1029-1091 (?).

The earliest scientific treatise that has come down to us on the subject of stained glass is the work of the monk Theophilus, written in the second half of the twelfth century.[1] The careful details set forth in this work show us that the craft of painting on glass was, at the period of Theophilus's treatise, an acknowledged one, and

[1] "Diversarum Artium Schedula" by the Monk Theophilus, twelfth century (late?).

that the art had already made no little progress. The positive directions issued by the general chapter of the recently founded austere Cistercian community in A.D. 1134, which ordered that the windows of the abbeys of the Cistercians should be of simple white glass *without colour*, is a plain indication that the fashion among the Cluniac and other Benedictine houses of adorning their churches with rich stained glass had become already very general, and that the practice in question was to be avoided in the rigidly simple Cistercian abbeys.

The earliest certainly dated glass of any importance is probably that in some of the beautiful west windows of the cathedral of Chartres, A.D. 1145. Fragments, it is true, but only fragments, remain of the windows put up by the Abbot Suger at S. Denis in A.D. 1140–1144. "This glass at S. Denis," says a contemporary writer, "was of an extremely costly nature, the artists making use of sapphires for the colouring used in their manufacture." Other very ancient fragments exist at Le Mans, in S. Remi (Reims), in the cathedrals of Poitiers, Angers, Strasburg, &c. In England possibly the oldest glass we possess is in the nave of York Minster, but it consists only of a few fragments. The windows of Canterbury, Salisbury, and Lincoln, which are commonly cited as most ancient, belong to the following (the thirteenth) century.

The earliest stained glass, which perhaps may roughly be ascribed to the middle of the twelfth century, was generally what is termed pure mosaic—that is to say, was in most part made up of pieces of solid glass of different hues, largely reds and blues, termed technically "pot-metal" and "flashed glass." Pot-metal means glass of the same colour throughout its whole thickness, the pigment such

as carbonate of copper being stirred up with the melted glass in the "pot" or crucible before the glass was formed into sheets. The various lovely blues which form one of the glories of the "Chartres" and other famous windows are of pot-metal. The gorgeous ruby, so prominent a feature in mediæval windows, is always what is called "flashed"—that is, the ruby colour is only a thin coating overlaid on the surface of a colourless sheet of glass. This was done by first blowing a bubble of uncoloured glass; the bubble was then dipped in a pot of melted ruby glass, so that it was coated all over with red. The composite bubble was blown into an enlarged disc, and then cut up when cool into the required sizes.

The reason for this process of "flashing," as it is termed, was that the ruby was so strong a pigment that it would have made the glass much too dark and opaque if its whole thickness had been coloured with the red. The pigment which produced this magnificent ruby colour was an oxide of copper. The various pieces of pot and flashed glass were bound together by pieces of lead.

The "silver stain," a bright yellow, largely used by the glass-painters from the beginning of the fourteenth century, was produced by applying chloride of silver in the form of a white salt on to the surface of the colourless glass. The glass was then heated red-hot in a furnace, the salt decomposed, and gave a surface stain to the glass on which it was laid.

This is the only true stain which was used by glass-painters. By repeating the process more than once, deeper shades of orange were produced. The great beauty of the "silver stain" is that it by no means diminishes the transparency of the glass to which it is applied.

The "silver stain" was much used by the glass artists in the decorative parts of those canopies which were so largely introduced into Decorated and Perpendicular glass.

"Enamel paint" is another surface application. It was a true vitreous enamel of a deep brown or black, formed with oxide of iron ground to a fine powder, and then applied with a brush to the surface of the glass. After the drawing was complete, the glass was again heated red-hot, and the enamel lines fused into their place on the surface of the glass. Separate firings at different temperatures were required for the "silver stain" and the "enamel" lines. This "enamel" paint was used for the drawing of the faces, for the drapery of the figures, &c. The use of "enamel" paint and of the "silver stain," as shown in the great east window at Gloucester, which we are about to describe, gives lightness and brightness to the work, and obscures but little light.[1] The stained windows of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, owing to the use of that and comparatively speaking later inventions admitted light to a much greater degree than did the earlier windows, and thus the heavy richness of the earlier work, which is missed in much of the glass of the fourteenth and fifteenth century, is largely compensated for.

Thus as time went on the windows gradually became larger and more numerous, and generally lighter in colour. This change in windows is admirably exemplified in the great Gloucester Cathedral we have taken as an example in

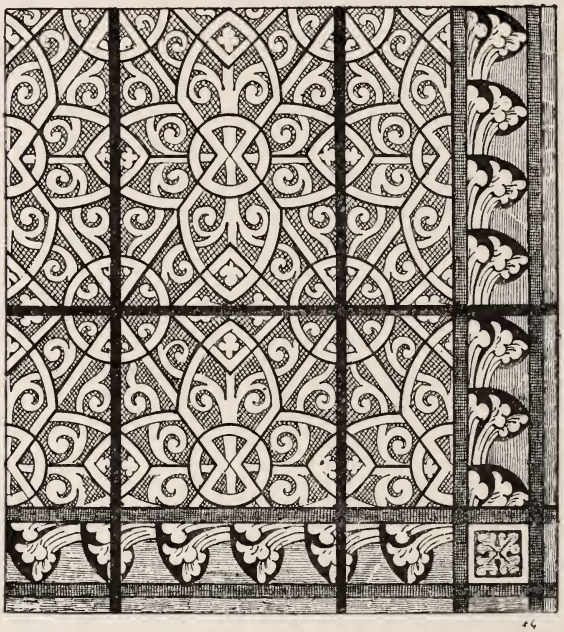
[1] The above description of the various processes used in glass-painting are generally taken from an MS. given to the writer by the late Professor Middleton of Cambridge, and of the South Kensington Museum.

our study. Roughly the Gloucester pile consists of three important and well-marked divisions : (1) The *nave*, which remains almost purely Romanesque as it left the builders' hands at the close of the eleventh century. The windows which here light the aisles, comparatively small, round-arched as when the Norman builders designed them, are filled with Perpendicular tracery, mullions, and transoms. It is in consequence somewhat gloomy and sombre. (2) The *choir* and *transepts*, here the original Romanesque work is effectually masked by the fourteenth-century Gothic veil, the windows are huge in size as well as more numerous, the east window of the choir notably being a grand wall of translucent glass, the north and south transept windows being also of prodigious size. (3) The *Lady Chapel* (late sixteenth century) beyond the choir is a magnificent and stately building, and may be called literally a hall of glass, the masonry in it occupying but little space, the prominent and principal feature being the mighty windows.

In later mediæval glass the drawing of the figures and the adjuncts to the figures was improved, the grotesqueness of much of the earlier work was corrected, but the splendid and glorious, though somewhat sombre, colouring which characterised the efforts of the early mediæval artists was, as has been remarked, generally absent in the great windows of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Although no specimens of this peculiar and very early method of glazing are found in Gloucester Cathedral, a few words on what is termed "grisaille" glass seem to be required in this little study. "Grisaille" may be defined as pattern windows glazed in *white* glass.

The lead makes the pattern. Viollet-le-Duc points out that in some cases the designer ingeniously, though not truthfully, economised labour by carrying across the face of the glass lines of lead, *not* inclosing separate pieces of glass, but mere strips making a pattern.



Grisaille and Border (Bourges, Thirteenth Century).

Some of the designs carried out in "grisaille" windows are elaborate; they are, however, in the opinion of the writer rarely, if ever, effective. No doubt "grisaille," to a large extent, is owing to the Cistercian direction to the churches connected with their widespread order strictly to avoid all rich-coloured glass. In some instances, no

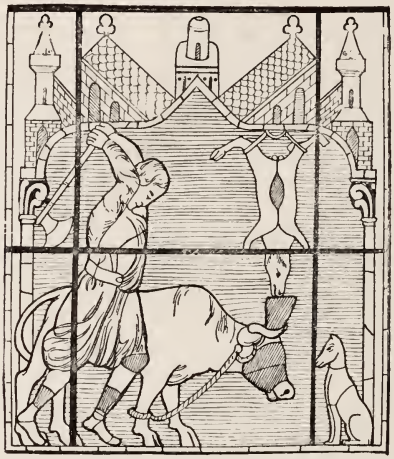
doubt outside the Cistercian order, this form of glazing was adopted for economy when the means requisite for the beautiful jewelled coloured glass were wanting. At an early date the "want of colour," as might have been expected, was felt by the mediæval builders in those windows they had filled with this white patterned glass, and an attempt was made in not a few cases partly to supply this lack by introducing discs or bosses of colour, and borders of colour into grisaille windows.

There are some admirable specimens of early grisaille work in Salisbury Cathedral, but the most charming example in England, perhaps in Europe, of "grisaille" is found at York in the famous window known popularly as the "Five Sisters." The "Five Sisters" close the north transept of the famous minster with a transparent veil of the palest silver grey—beautiful as a dream. The York example almost compels even the most ardent lover of jewelled glass to admire colourless "grisaille." But the pale silver grey "grisaille" of the "Five Sisters" is very rare.

In the foregoing little study on stained and painted glass we have in general terms spoken of the mediæval period, including thereby, roughly, the period between the later years of the eleventh and the early years of the sixteenth centuries. These 450 years may fairly be considered as "the age of stained glass." Before the twelfth century the art was in its infancy. We possess nothing of its productions, the windows it filled were evidently few in number, and those few small and narrow. Again, *after* the later years of the sixteenth century, the art rapidly declined, and what it produced was sadly inferior to the work of the mediæval craftsmen, and it is only in

quite recent times, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, that it has shown any real signs of recovery. What has been termed "the Gothic revival" has awakened a longing to recover and to practise anew a beautiful art which for nigh three and a half centuries had been lost.

But during the four centuries or more when glass-



"Signature" Window at Chartres, Thirteenth Century.
(Gift of Butchers' Guild.)

staining was in its glory, it must not be supposed that the art was stationary. During that long period it went through many changes. In the later years of the fifteenth and earlier years of the sixteenth centuries a perfectly new and striking, though but a short-lived, school of glass-painters, generally known under the well-known name of the "Renaissance," was introduced.

Winston gives generally the following dates for the

several styles. "There is no style in painted glass coeval with the Norman in architecture, the glass found in Norman buildings really belonging to the "early English" style of glass-painting, which was succeeded by the "Decorated" in about A.D. 1280, and that by the Perpendicular in about A.D. 1380." The "Renaissance" style in glass-painting, which was concurrent for a while with the Perpendicular in architecture, commenced about A.D. 1500, or a little earlier, and may be said to have ended in A.D. 1550."

To this fairly accurate generalisation we may add a few rough notes on the styles in the different centuries.

Twelfth Century.

Of the painted glass belonging to this century we have on the Continent a few good examples, notably at S. Remi (Reims), in the cathedral at Poitiers, at Châlons, at Angers, at Le Mans, and especially at Chartres at the west end of the cathedral, a very little at S. Denis. It is doubtful whether any undoubted specimens of the glass of this century remain in England.

Indeed, our country possesses but little of what may fairly be termed very early glass. The object mainly aimed at by the artists of this date was deep, rich, jewelled colour, to which everything may be said to be sacrificed—light, drawing, &c. Medallion windows are perhaps the most characteristic feature of this early period. These medallions contain figure-subjects on a very small scale. A border, broad and rich in colour, is another usual feature. A striking and well-known instance of these medallions, dating, however, from the first half of the following century (the thirteenth), is the magnificent

glazing of the Sainte Chapelle (Paris), completed under Saint Louis, A.D. 1248. In this comparatively small building the windows contain about eleven hundred separate medallions. The lower lights were destroyed in the revolutionary period at the end of the eighteenth century,

THE ABBÉ SUGER KNEELING BEFORE THE VIRGIN.
("Signature" Window in S. Denis. Twelfth Century.)

these have been on the whole admirably restored. The groundwork of this superb glass is mostly a deep rich blue.

THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

Again in France must the noblest examples of the glass of this century be sought. Germany also possesses some few examples, as at Ratisbon, Freiburg, Nuremberg, &c. There are some fine medallion windows (thirteenth century) in the choir of Canterbury Cathedral. Salisbury possesses some fine grisaille glass of this century. The

famous Five Sisters window of the same age at York, is certainly the finest specimen of early "Grisaille" in the world.

Many of the more important French churches are extraordinarily rich in the solemn, gorgeous glass of the thirteenth century. We would instance Reims, Bourges, and Le Mans. But the cathedral of Chartres is after all the home of early glass, which largely dates from the thirteenth century.[1]

A stranger visiting Chartres thus wrote down his first impressions of the glazing of this stately house of God:

"It was a dazzling hot summer's day I entered the vast dark church, and coming as I did from the glare outside, at first could see nothing, so I sat down and closed my eyes for a brief space. Then I looked round, and in the dim light became conscious of the dizzy height of the great church, with its forest of graceful clustered columns bearing up the mighty arches on which rested the soaring vaulting of a fretted roof, scarcely visible above, so high it seemed.

"But though the columns, the arches, and vaulting high over all, presented a perfect picture of strength crowned with beauty, it was not the daring and exquisite conception of the building, perfect though it was, which principally attracted the eye. It was the *light*, neither clear nor dark, streaming from the countless windows of all sizes, which filled the heart and mind with bewildering admiration. Every window in this marvellous temple was filled with more or less rich and gorgeous glass, and the light entered as though through countless gems of

[1] The medallion glass of the Sainte Chapelle (Paris) has been already noticed under Century Twelve.

ruby, sapphire, and emerald. These many-coloured gems flamed alike in the many lancet windows of the great church, as in the blazing wheels of the great 'Roses' in the transepts and west end.

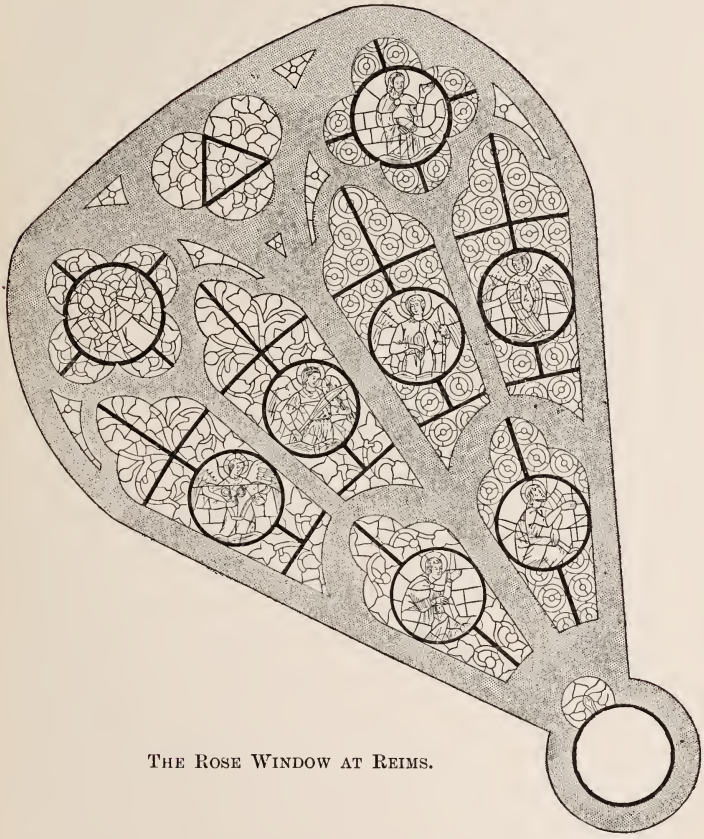
"It was the most lovely thing I had ever seen on earth, indeed it did not seem as though it belonged to earth. It was a living picture out of S. John's Apocalypse. I gazed and gazed at the perfect beauty—and was satisfied!"

To realise the glory of a mediæval cathedral, to understand what our fathers meant by their love for colour, the cathedral of Chartres must be studied. We shall partly understand—then.

The great "rose" windows belong especially to this century; they are found principally in France. Among grandest examples, perhaps, are the "Roses" of Reims, Amiens, and Nôtre Dame of Paris, and most beautiful perhaps of all at Chartres. In England they never found favour with the craft of glass-painters. The Lincoln rose window, for instance, bears no comparison with the magnificent "roses" of France. There is little picture glass in these great wheels of splendid colouring; they are little else than marvellous mosaics of colour. When the western sun falls on the west front of Reims Cathedral, and lights up the great "Rose of the West," the effect is dazzling. As the rays flash through the ruby and the blue, flooding the pile with shafts of coloured flames, which play round the forest of columns and the soaring arches overhead, it is for a brief while a scene of awe-ful beauty as the colours fall with curious changes on the massive carven stone-work. England possesses nothing of this kind.

In many respects the glass of this century is the most

striking of all. De Caumont in his "Abécédaire" (*Architecture Réligieuse*) styles it on the whole "le bel



The Rose Window at Reims.

âge de vitrail." The amount of glass manufactured in the thirteenth century, especially in France, was very large. It was a great church-building age, and many of the vast

French cathedrals were erected or enlarged at this time, and the craft of glass-painters attracted a number of artists into their ranks. The cost of these splendid decorations of the greater churches was borne not only by royal and noble personages, but by guilds of various trades—butchers, tanners, &c.—who vied with the wealthy princes and barons in their generosity towards the great prayer houses of the age.

Fourteenth Century.

In France, the great home of glass-painting, we have fewer examples of the art of this century. More are found in England. As the century advanced, what is termed "Decorated" by slow degrees gave place to "Perpendicular." We have already roughly given A.D. 1280 to 1380 as the Decorated period, although the glass of the Perpendicular school had begun to make its appearance before the latter date. Glass gradually became less brilliant and less jewel-like in colour, while more careful in drawing. The windows were constructed on a larger scale, the taste for additional light grew pronounced, and a far larger amount of white or faintly-stained glass was used, while less of solid "pot-glass" and "flashed glass," and more enamel painting appears. The medallion of various shapes and sizes, from the comparatively large medallion of Chartres to the tiny medallion of the Sainte Chapelle, after the thirteenth century had passed out of fashion, and it appears no more. The single figure takes its place very generally.

In England we have some fine examples of these Decorated and very many of the Perpendicular windows. The great east window of Gloucester is a magnificent specimen

of the transition of Decorated into Perpendicular, which will presently be described at length. One especial feature of this period must be spoken of—the "Canopy," which from about A.D. 1280 became a singularly prominent object in most stained windows, and under various developments remained a conspicuous feature all through the age of glass-painting.

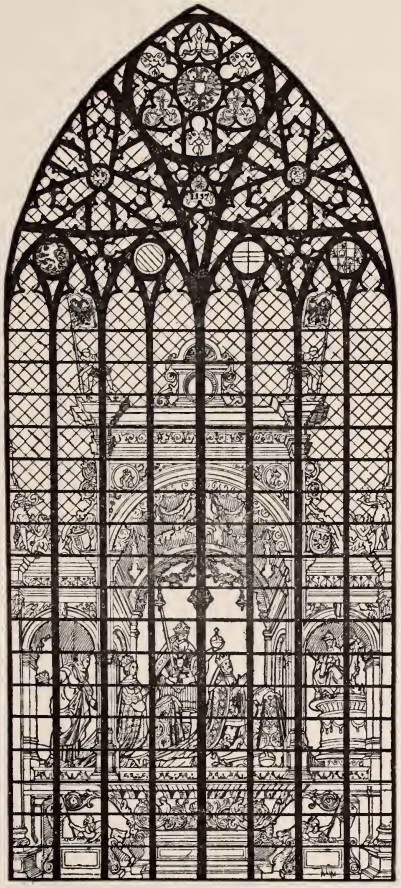
The "Canopy" was not an absolutely new feature in the earlier period in the rarer single-figure treatment. The figures had been enclosed in an architectural framework, but the framework was inconspicuous. But in "Decorated" glass, roughly from 1280 onwards, the Canopy became of great size, and often strong in colour; the colour being mostly some shade of yellow, and not unfrequently quite out of proportion to the figure it framed. As the fourteenth century advanced, the Canopy was generally modified, and appeared more silvery in tone, generally more pleasing in effect than in Decorated windows; but it remained unfortunately a most striking and, generally speaking, an uninteresting part of the window all through the long Perpendicular period.

Many reasons conduced to the general use of this canopy work in stained-glass windows. It afforded opportunity to introduce more white or faintly-stained glass, and thus enormously lightened the window. The artist in glass was induced to copy or to introduce into his window the elaborate crotchets and finials, and the many favourite and elaborate architectural ornaments which were perpetually being devised by the Gothic artists. These canopies, too, were less costly to produce than rich figure-work, and as in very many cases expense was a serious question, this consideration no doubt assisted the multiplication and development of canopy work.

The Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries.

Stained glass, of what may be styled Perpendicular style, became generally the fashion in this period; more and more white glass was used. The canopy continued generally a very conspicuous feature. The colouring grew less deep, less pronounced, the drawing being ever more carefully attended to, but the general effect was less rich, less jewelled. As the century advanced, a new style was visible in stained and painted windows; a new departure in the beautiful art was manifest. The "Renaissance" idea which took possession of literature, architecture, art of all kinds, towards the close of the fifteenth century, was strikingly visible in painted windows. The Renaissance era produced some magnificent examples here, but its glory was of comparatively short duration. Before the sixteenth century was closed, the beautiful art of glass-painting was already in its decadence. The quality *par excellence* of Renaissance glass has been well summarised as consisting in its careful painting, in its accurate drawing. It produced some unmistakably magnificent windows, such as for instance the well-known glorious conceptions of Van Orley, in S. Gudule at Brussels. The "Canopy" was still *the* conspicuous feature, but the canopy was changed from the well-known Perpendicular forms with its Gothic features. It often assumed the appearance of a great triumphal arch, and now and again a landscape acted as a background. In the Low Countries especially we find grand "Renaissance" glass, notably at Brussels, in S. Gudule, and at Gouda and Liége. In England we have comparatively few examples. In King's College chapel,

Cambridge, are the most remarkable English windows



Renaissance Window in the Cathedral of S. Gudule, Brussels.

of this school. There is some beautiful Renaissance glass at Lichfield, but it was brought from Herkenrode,

in Flanders. The well-known Renaissance windows at the east end of S. George's, Hanover Square, though somewhat fragmentary, are beautiful in colouring. They are not, however, English work.

It is too common a practice among some writers to condemn the "Renaissance" spirit with an unsparing, sweeping condemnation. In their eyes, nothing in that wonderful age is worthy even of toleration, much less of admiration. Letters and art are alike degraded in the eyes of these critics. Now, it is undisputed that, *after* the "Renaissance" period, architecture and its faithful handmaid art of glass-painting, perished from among us. But during that short brilliant period, roughly coinciding with the sixteenth century,[1] not a few exquisite works, alike in architecture and in glass-painting, were produced. It is true they were quite unlike all mediæval Gothic work; they were inspired, we know, with a different spirit. But even the most devoted admirers of the glorious Gothic creations of the middle ages must acknowledge the beauty, and feel the charm, of the work of the architect and glass-painter of that too brief period when "Renaissance" was at its best. It is true that this short period was the sunset time of the long day of art in its highest sense; but it was a radiant, golden sunset, not unworthy the long bright day of which it was the striking close.

In glass-painting the "Renaissance" period has been charged with irreligiousness, accused of pandering to human pride, as forgetting to teach the old divine lessons of devotion to God and sacrifice of self, not

[1] It was not really quite so long as a hundred years. The glory of Renaissance glass-painting really dates from some years after the sixteenth century began, and was over some years before it closed.

the least among the glories of mediæval glass, and the charge is made with some reason. The great mediæval artists filled their translucent panels for the most part with representations of saints and angels, with simple scenes of divine history, with quaint symbols, all leading up to the heavenly mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption. The donors of the sumptuous windows of the middle ages were content at most with a little pictured quaint signature in a remote corner of their beautiful gifts of glass.[1] In the "Renaissance" window too often portraits of the donor and his house fill the centre of the fair glassy picture, as in the famous window of Van Orley in the stately cathedral of S. Gudule of Brussels, one of the noblest and most striking productions of the age. In many a brilliant work of this hour of human pride a gorgeous display of heraldry takes the place of the Virgin, the saint, or the martyr of an earlier and more devout age. But we have too a vast number of Renaissance windows devoted to noble subjects. We would instance the beautiful work of the school at Beauvais, at Auxerre and Conches, at Ecouen and Montmorenci, at S. Gervais in Paris, at Troyes, and above all at Rouen in such churches as S. Patrice, S. Vincent, and S. Maclou. We have only named a few great French examples of this remarkable and brilliant school of glass-painting.

But, alas! it soon came to an end. It was but the swiftly passing glory of a sunset. Before the last years of the sixteenth century the art of glass-painting was already a dying art, and little that was worth preserving was produced in the following seventeenth century. The

[1] See the little pictures of mediæval signatures of donors of stained windows on pp. 190, 192.

story of the eighteenth is even sadder. The historian of the craft of glass-painting is silent when he has dwelt upon the short-lived glories of the Renaissance.

A well-known example of an eighteenth-century window is the famous "Sir Joshua Reynolds" glass in the chapel of New College, Oxford. Although the drawing of the figures is by the great master, the effect is melancholy, poor, colourless.

In the same chapel are some old Gothic stained windows, not particularly meritorious of their kind, but they form a striking contrast to the unhappy eighteenth-century effort. The Gothic (Perpendicular) canopies, as is but too often the case, are out of proportion, but the colouring on the whole is generally admirable, and the general effect delightful, and the eye quickly travels from the unpleasing "Reynolds" glass to the mediæval work, —and rests there. The secret of the old masters of the craft of glass-painters, alas! was lost when Sir Joshua designed his beautiful figures for the New College Chapel.

In Gloucester we have examples for the same dreary comparison in the nineteenth century. The great west window of the nave is filled with glass of about A.D. 1860. The colours are crude and staring, utterly devoid of harmony, the white glass is muddy, and the drawing weak and unsuggestive. No effect of crushed gems is produced. It is simply an ugly meaningless picture. It is a fair specimen of what the art of glass-painting had sunk to in the middle of the nineteenth century. Opposite to it, it would seem for comparison's sake, partly veiled by the heavy choir screen surmounted by the huge organ, rises the glorious wall of glass of the middle years of the fourteenth century —

Window in the Chapel of New College, Oxford.

throwing its soft jewelled rays in waves of light across the soaring choir in the distance. The two great windows closing the west and east ends of the mighty pile of Gloucester well illustrate what has been said of a "forgotten art."[1]

From the slumber—a slumber too closely resembling the sleep of death—which for some three centuries has paralysed this the noblest of church decorative arts, the last quarter of the nineteenth century has witnessed a sudden awakening. In the great cathedral, as in many a less conspicuous parish church, have appeared, in the closing years of the century, windows which challenge comparison with much of the striking and beautiful workmanship of the art-loving middle ages. When the historical sentiment, ever an important factor in our estimation of ancient glass, and possibly some beautifying influences owing to lapse of time, have been taken into account, not

[1] The above little historical sketch of glass-painting is but a "*sketch*," but the outlines of a study of a great and important subject. Much, very much, the writer feels, has been left unsaid. The examples have been well-nigh all drawn from England and France, the other Continental great schools finding little place in this brief study. Among Continental countries France, the great home of glass-painters, has been principally drawn upon for instances. The reader, if he be really interested in the "art," after all the greatest ornament of the churches of our fathers, is referred for further information to the following works, which are easily procured, where details and deductions, which are omitted in this necessarily short essay or sketch which we have woven into the tapestry of our little "White Robe of Churches," are given at greater or less length: *Viollet le Duc's* striking, though perhaps too technical article, "Vitrail," in the great "Dictionnaire de l'Architecture Française;" *De Caumont*, "Abécédaire" ("Architecture Réligieuse"), too brief, but always suggestive; *Olivier Merson*, "Les Vitraux," an admirable treatise (crowned by the Académie des Beaux Arts); *Lewis Day's* exhaustive book on "Windows," 1898; and the little essay of *De Guilhermy* on the "Sainte Chapelle, and its Medallion Windows" (tenth edition, 1895).

a little of the glass executed by the craft of glass-painters at the close of the nineteenth century approaches in beauty and effect near to the glory and splendour of some of the noblest mediæval work, and every year marks progress. When cost of production is disregarded, the living artists in glass-painting, we dare to think, will soon be able fearlessly to invite a comparison of some of their efforts with those of the period which has been justly regarded as the age *par excellence* of stained windows.

As a fitting conclusion to our little historic survey of stained glass, we proceed to a somewhat detailed account of the great east window of the cathedral we are especially dwelling upon.

It is not only one of the chief glories of Gloucester, and as such naturally finds a place in the scheme of our work, but it is, too, one of the world-famed examples of the beautiful art which our fathers loved so well and brought to so high a pitch of perfection—an art too long lost, but which our own generation is striving so faithfully and earnestly to recover.

The vast window which closes the east end of the choir of Gloucester is a mighty transparent wall glowing with rich colour and silvery glass. It is a striking example of the beauties and also of the defects of the stained glass of the middle of the fourteenth century, which some critics consider the best period of mediæval art. The defect, which at once strikes the lover of ancient glass, is the want of that deep rich colouring which the artist of the preceding century, the thirteenth, aimed at before all other considerations. At Tewkesbury, another great mediæval abbey of the Severn lands, only some dozen miles north of Gloucester, where the choir

windows are of about the same date, the splendid deep hues of the thirteenth century are aimed at, with the result of a magnificent and gorgeous series of windows crowning the Tewkesbury Abbey apse. But the light is wanting at Tewkesbury which at Gloucester floods the exquisite stone veil of lace-like tracery which so to speak hangs from the fretted roof of the lofty choir, reaching down to the marble floor. Nothing can be conceived happier than the effect of the great east window here. For a moment one longs for the deep dark gemmed windows of Reims or Chartres, but only for a moment, for it is quickly seen how such a sombre wall of gemmed glass, beautiful though it could have been, could not have lit up the glorious choir of Abbot Wygmore as does so perfectly the present pale silvery window, with the rarer but exquisite tints of sapphire and of ruby, with here and there a gleam of gold.

All critics are agreed that it is one of the most important and beautiful windows in England, as it is the largest.[1] The east window of York comes next to it in size, with its splendid glazing, of a little more than fifty years later. The Gloucester window was finished before A.D. 1350.

Its history is of national interest. The great architectural transformation of the Benedictine abbey of Gloucester was in active progress from the year of the death of Edward II. at Berkeley, A.D. 1327.

Some time in the fourth decade of the century (the fourteenth), Lord Bradestone, an important vassal of the House of Berkeley, was governor of the castle fortress

[1] The Gloucester window is 72 feet high and 38 feet wide. The York window, 78 feet high and 33 feet wide. The lower lights at Gloucester which open directly into the Lady Chapel are not glazed.

of Gloucester, and reading from the story told by the heraldry in its lower lights, the famous east window of the abbey, which still after some 550 years of the abbey's changing fortunes is the object of wondering admiration alike of the skilled critic and of the unlearned observer, was the offering of this Lord Bradestone to the abbey monks. It was his contribution to the marvellous transformation work which, regardless of cost, was being carried on in the east limb of the grand old Romanesque abbey, The heraldry in question consists of some ten coats-of-arms: there were originally fourteen, but four are now missing. In these ten we find the arms of the Black Prince and a group of certain of his brave companions-in-arms, who were distinguished for military talent and conspicuous valour in the wars in France under King Edward III. during the campaign of A.D. 1346–47, famous for the battle of Cressy and the successful siege of Calais. The knightly barons, whose shields are blazoned on the lower lights of one window, were all more or less connected with Gloucestershire and its neighbourhood. They include, besides the shield of the Black Prince, the arms of the Earl of Arundel, Lord Berkeley, the Earls of Warwick, Northampton, Lancaster, and Pembroke, Lord Talbot, Sir Maurice de Berkeley, and Lord Bradestone. Lord Bradestone's coat, as donor, occupies the least honourable place; the coat of Sir Maurice de Berkeley, Bradestone's dear friend and brother-in-arms, slain at the siege of Calais, although his inferior in rank, being placed before his own. Our window may fairly be styled the "Cressy" window. This great historical glass-painting may be attributed to A.D. 1347–49, and was no doubt completed not later than 1350. It was therefore being put up in its place the

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

The East Window

year that the Black Death was raging in England. This awful scourge ravaged Gloucester with extreme severity in 1349. It is estimated by some authorities that nearly one half of the entire population of England and Wales were swept away, but the proportion of deaths in Gloucester was even greater than this!

The leading subject of "the picture" was the enthronement of the Blessed Virgin. The two central lights are treated as one by the glass-painter here, *both* lights having a ruby background, while the rest of the lights are alternately ruby-red and blue. With the exception of this main central group, which consists of Christ and His Mother, both, singularly enough, placed on an equal level, all the other subjects are single figures, the top row consisting of angels, and above the angels is a grand series of shrine-work, very richly coloured. The second row contains the leading subject, the enthronisation of Mary, with the twelve apostles, six on either side of the Virgin and Christ. Immediately below are a row of saints. Beneath them are figures of ecclesiastics intermingled with one or two kings, and in the lowest light are the coats-of-arms above alluded to, belonging to heroes of the French campaign.

The general scheme of colour in this superb and fragile relic of the days of the great Plantagenet king is extremely delicate and beautiful. "Pot-metal" (blue) and ruby, "flashed," for the reasons above given, are only used as backgrounds. The ruby is charmingly varied, and even in the deepest hues is luminous, and the tone of the blue can hardly be surpassed, the whole of the figures and their canopies being in pearly-white glass, with the drawing of the faces and other details in brown

enamel paint, and some enrichments in silver stain, varying from a lemon yellow to a deep orange. This soft and delicate treatment gives an exceptional appearance of lightness and brilliance to the whole work, and the mighty transparent wall which closes the east end of the soaring choir reveals rather than obscures the filmy lace-like work which seems to hang from the gorgeous gold-encrusted vault above. The luminous pearly look of the white glass is owing to the body of the glass being full of minute air-bubbles. Each of these tiny bubbles catches the light, and then reflects it out from the interior of the glass, so that the glass is not merely translucent, but is itself actually luminous, each air-bubble being a centre of radiated light.

In the apex of the window, in the topmost light of all, is a figure which has evidently been placed there in some far-back restoration of the window. It has nothing to do with the original scheme of the artist, and its date is nearly a century later than the rest of the figures. It is the portrait of a pope. Its lofty position is the reason of its generally escaping the notice it deserves, for it is enriched with small jewels of glass in blue and red, which are fixed on to the surface of the glass, so that they stand out in actual relief, giving an effect of rare richness. It was evidently executed for some position much nearer the eye. This process of jewelling was very costly, and very rarely practised.[1]

[1] The above description of the great east window of Gloucester is partly based on Mr. Winston's paper in the "Archæological Journal," vol. xx., but mostly is taken from a MS. study by Mr. J. Henry Middleton, late Slade Professor in the University of Cambridge, given to the author of this work. Mr. Middleton (differing from Mr. Winston) considers the drawing of the faces and draperies as specially vigorous and effective. The work reminded that great scholar and critic, of the drawing on the best painted vases of the Greeks. The details respecting the manufacture of stained glass are Mr. Middleton's.

It is a puzzling window exactly to classify when the custodian is asked to say if it be a Perpendicular window in harmony with the "new" work of Abbot Wygmore, in the days when Edward III. was king, A.D. 1346–1350. Emphatically the general impression left by this mighty wall of jewelled silvery glass on the eye of one fairly trained in styles is that of an example of purely Perpendicular work. This at once impresses the student, it being in perfect harmony with the striking veil of Perpendicular lace-work, hung over, so to speak, the old Norman work. The masonry of the window, to begin with, is distinctly Perpendicular. The general arrangement of the colours is also purely Perpendicular. Deep lines of ruby and of blue are carried straight up through the long lengths of each alternate light. The masses of white in the figures, only slightly treated with yellow stain, scarcely would be seen in what is known as "Decorated"[1] glass.

On the other hand, the details of the Canopies, a very prominent feature in the window, emphatically are *not* Perpendicular, but belong to the older style of "Decorated." It is a strange *transition* window, and the great artist who designed this faëry creation was scarcely aware of the great change which was passing over architecture, and, somewhat more slowly, over its handmaid art of glass-painting.

[1] Winston is certainly inaccurate when he describes the painted glass of the window as a pure example of "Decorated."

CHAPTER XXI

THE HOLY TABLE OR ALTAR

(1) *In the Church of the Catacombs.*

At the eastern end of the choir of Gloucester Cathedral is placed, in accordance with the unvarying use of the Anglican Communion, the Holy Table or Altar. The Holy Table, to give it its more accurate name—although the alternative designation "Altar," which is more commonly used, belongs also to an immemorial antiquity—occupies the place of the High or principal Altar of the old Mediæval Abbey. In the Middle Ages, as we have had occasion to notice several times, there were in such an Abbey as the one we are specially describing, many smaller altars in different parts of the Great Church. But *the* Holy Table or Altar *par excellence*, the High Altar to use its customary designation, was as a rule placed at or near the eastern extremity of the choir. The Anglican "Use" here closely follows the Mediæval arrangement.

The history of the Holy Table or Altar in a Christian Church is of the greatest importance, and stretches back to the earliest days of Christianity.

In the smallest chapel of the Catacombs in the first, second, and third centuries, in the magnificent basilicas which arose after the "Peace" of the Church in the fourth century, in the stately cathedrals and abbeys of

the Middle Ages, in the grandest Christian temples of the nineteenth century, as well as in the humblest village churches, alike in the Greek, Latin, and Anglican communions, the central, the most prominent, the most revered object is the "Holy Table," the "Altar," on which are celebrated the sacred mysteries of the Faith, the Eucharist, the Mass of the mediæval and later Roman Catholic Church, called indifferently the Lord's Supper and the Holy Communion.

In the earliest times, no doubt, a simple wooden table was all that was used by the Apostles and their first converts, but very soon a peculiar and striking change was made. *The Table very generally became a Tomb*, and with scarcely any exception the tomb, with various modifications and many forms of decoration, has been the more common, though not the universal, form or appearance of the "Holy Table" in all the Christian churches in every part of the world.

It was the *central* object, so Eusebius, writing early in the fourth century directly after the Peace of the Church, to Paulinus, Bishop of Tyre, thus speaks of it as the "Holy Altar" placed in the midst of the church's sanctuary, where sat the Bishop and Presbyters. Durandus, the mediæval liturgiologist (thirteenth century) thus emphasises and sums up its symbolism: "As the heart is the centre of the human body, so the altar is the centre of a church."

We will briefly sketch the story of its principal changes and developments through the Christian ages.

It is in the Catacombs of Rome that we have the earliest known examples of a Christian church. The Catacombs of Rome consist of a vast labyrinth of narrow

subterranean galleries excavated in the strata of volcanic earth that underlie the city of Rome, or, to speak more accurately, its immediate neighbourhood. They consist of well-nigh endless galleries excavated at different levels one beneath the other, sometimes to the number of five or even seven stories, communicating by narrow flights of steps cut in the native rock.

They were the work of the congregations of the Roman Christians during the later part of the first century; during the second and third centuries, and during the early years of the fourth century. They are of enormous extent, as far as they have been as yet explored. The united lengths of these wonderful underground galleries, passages, or corridors have been variously calculated as amounting to 800 or 900 miles (Marchi); by Martigny, however (in the "Dictionnaire des Antiquités Chrétiennes), as not more than 500 to 600 miles.

The number of graves in these strange Christian galleries Marchi puts at six to seven millions. Later "guesses" suggest a much smaller number. But the data we possess are after all not sufficient to warrant any certain conclusions either as to their real extent, or to the number of bodies buried in these interminable corridors, and chambers leading out of the corridors.

There is no doubt that these catacombs were the work entirely of the Roman Christian community during those two centuries and a half when the religion of Jesus was more or less a persecuted and proscribed religion. Although primarily designed for the interment of the Christian Brotherhood of Rome, it is in these subterranean passages, corridors, and chambers (cubicula as they were termed, of which we shall presently speak), leading directly out of the corridors, that much of the

religious life of the Roman Christian, especially in times of danger, during the first two and a half centuries undoubtedly was spent. The dead were mostly laid in the corridors which constituted by far the larger portion of these vast cemeteries, some of the chambers (cubicula) leading out of the corridors being largely used for worship.

The walls of the corridors were vertical and were pierced on each side with long low horizontal recesses, commencing just above the level of the floor and rising tier above tier like the berths in a ship's cabin, to the number of six, seven, or even more ranges. In these recesses the dead were carefully and reverently laid. Each locus (loculus as it has been termed in more modern times) was, after the introduction of a body, sealed with great care with slabs of marble or with large tiles cemented together. The bodies of the faithful were not buried naked, but were carefully wrapt, some of them in more or less costly linen cloths. On many, but by no means on all, of the marble or tile "closures" inscriptions are painted or carved, often very roughly.

Gallery with Loculi.

On these corridors or passages, stretching as they do

tier below tier for miles and miles, we need not dwell, for they have nothing specially to do with the subject of the present little study on the Altar or Holy Table connected with the Eucharistic rite, but we have given this description of them in order to make clear what we are about to state. For out of these corridors and passages, where the dead lay so thickly in their little excavated recesses, led an immense number of small sepulchral chambers known as "cubicula," for the greater part family or official burying-places. These cubicula were mostly insignificant in size and of various shapes—circular, semi-circular, triangular, pentagonal, &c. But besides these innumerable comparatively small chambers in different catacombs are found, also leading out of the corridors of the dead, chambers of a considerably greater area. These rarer chambers were probably specially designed and used for the purpose of religious assemblies.

In very many of the little separate chambers or cubicula, at the *extremity* of the room or sepulchral vault, is a tomb, perhaps of one who suffered martyrdom, perhaps of the original builder of the chamber. Two forms of tomb are common, the one a table tomb either hewn out of the living rock, or constructed of slabs of stone, marble, or long tiles, and closed by a slab of stone or marble lying horizontally on the top, thus forming *a table.*

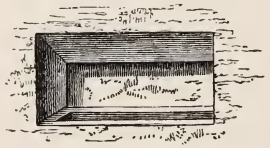
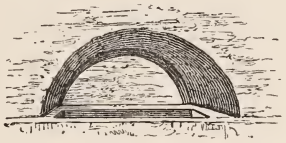


Table Tomb.

The other form, more usual, though scarcely so old, possesses an arched semicircular opening *above* the grave hollowed out for the dead, the grave being dug from

above downwards. This form of tomb, so general in the "cubicula," is known as an "arcosolium" (from *arcus*, an arch). Here, too, the space which contained the dead is covered by a slab of marble and stone.

Upon these slabs, covering the tombs both in the form of the "table tomb" above described, and in the form known as an "arcosolium," it is an accepted fact that the Holy Eucharist was celebrated, and that these tombs were the first stone altars; there is, indeed, no doubt that this was the case, and that some of the tombs in question were used in the Eucharist celebrations, and that the later general practice of constructing altars more or less in the shape of tombs springs from their early use in the Catacombs by the small congregations who gathered together in these cubicula — not always and not necessarily only in times of persecution. It is a mistake to suppose that the second and third centuries were a period of bitter persecution at Rome. For a very long period, viz. from A.D. 65, the date of the persecution of Nero, down to A.D. 249–251, the date of the persecution of Decius, there is no certain record of any *general* persecution of the Christians in Rome, although in the course of these two hundred years there were doubtless many periods of uneasiness, anxiety, and even grave danger for the professors of the faith of Jesus—not a few outbreaks of popular violence directed against the Christians, and isolated acts of cruelty and severity towards the more prominent professors of what was always an unpopular religion. Under Decius, A.D. 249, and under Diocletian and



Arcosolium.

Galerius, A.D. 303, we know, however, there were general and merciless persecutions.

Now, there is little doubt that in the earliest days of the faith the holy table or altar was simply a wooden table like that upon which traditionally our Lord instituted the sacred communion rite. There is an immemorial tradition which relates how portions of the *wood* of the table on which S. Peter celebrated the Lord's Supper are enclosed in the altar of the basilica of S. John Lateran, and that the altar of that church, owing to the possession of such a sacred treasure, alone among Roman Catholic altars contains no other relics.

In the larger oratories of the Catacombs which are supposed to have been constructed for the purpose of religious assemblies there are a few rare traces of specially constructed altars, some of them occupying the position, subsequently so common, viz. the centre of the apse. Although the tomb form was so general in the Church of the Catacombs, it was not universal, for in the cemetery of S. Calixtus, for instance, there are traces left by four pillars which had supported an altar in that position. In the immediate neighbourhood of what is known as the Papal crypt of the same cemetery of S. Calixtus, in the so-called chambers of the sacraments, there are some very ancient fresco paintings, executed probably towards the close of the second century, on one of which the altar is represented as a tripod. All this points to the fact that in the earliest period there was no definite form—no special material for the holy table.

Much that has been in modern times said and quoted as authoritative in the question of ritual arrangements as bearing on very early practices in the church of the

Catacombs must be received with great caution. For it must be borne in mind that these wonderful remains of early Christian life have been sadly tampered with. We know not what extent of damage and destruction they suffered in the undoubted persecution period of A.D. 249–251 when Decius was Emperor, and again in A.D. 303 in the reigns of Diocletian and Galerius, and later when the Goths sacked Rome under Vitiges in A.D. 537 (the ravages of these Gothic hordes we know extended to the Catacombs), and later still we are conscious that havoc and destruction were wrought in the eighth century by the Lombards under Astolphus. Other instances of far-reaching barbaric mischief and deplorable destruction could be adduced. But perhaps the primitive arrangements of the Catacombs have suffered more by religious restoration than even from the sacrilegious devastations of Goths and Lombards. Several of the Popes, notably John III., A.D. 568, Paul I., A.D. 761, Paschal I., A.D. 817, were busy in works of change and of restoration, and even of wholesale spoliation, in the ancient and venerable places so dear to all serious Christians, so precious to the historian and archæologist.

Still, after making all due allowance for the changes wrought by successive barbarian pillagers, by well-meaning but destructive restorers, by centuries of neglect, in the vast and still only partly explored Catacombs, which, with their galleries extending several hundred miles, their numberless cubicula, their rarer crypts or oratories, exist to this day beneath the suburbs of modern Rome,—there remains amply sufficient evidence for us to trace in these marvellous reliques of the great Roman Church of the first three centuries the gradual evolution of the form of the altar or holy table which has so gener-

ally been adopted and preserved in the Christian Church since the epoch of the "Peace" proclaimed by the Emperor Constantine in the course of the first quarter of the fourth century.

Nor need it be a matter of any surprise that this primitive pattern of the Holy Table or Altar was derived from the Roman Catacomb "use," when it is remembered how enormous and widespread was the influence of Rome between the years A.D. 70–313; how everything centred in the great capital of the world, how, of course, Christian Rome like Pagan Rome would naturally be looked on as the centre and fountain-head of influence and of fashion in things religious as in things civil.

To Rome would of course flow a perpetual stream of Christians from every part of the civilised world, on errands of business, pleasure, devotion; those returning from the Mighty City to their own often distant homes, would naturally reproduce in their own loved sanctuaries what they had seen at Rome, where the famous Apostles Peter and Paul had sealed their faith with the red seal of their life blood, and where their honoured remains rested.

It is certainly a strange story, that of the evolution of the tomb-shaped holy table or altar. Most probably in the earliest instance the making use of the tomb was a simple matter of convenience, little groups of harassed Christians meeting together for safety in the rough-hewn chambers of the dead, with whom they had been specially connected in life by ties of blood or friendship. In these rude cubicula or chambers there was no furniture, scarcely perhaps a chair or a stool: naturally the slab of stone and marble in a recess of the wall at the end of the

cubiculum or chamber would be used as a table for the holy bread and wine. The knowledge, too, that beneath that stone lay not unfrequently the hallowed remains of some brave confessor of the faith, would deepen the feelings of awe and reverence with which the little company would share together the memorials of their adorable Master's dying love, and so the use of the "tomb," with its sacred memories, at the end of the little sepulchral chamber, continued in the church of the Catacombs even when it was not necessary, the "faithful" discerning in it at once a memory and a symbol. Curiously too, but not unnaturally, the mystical words[1] of the Revelation of S. John fitted in with the practice with strange realistic accuracy, thus giving the "use" almost a sacred scriptural sanction.

More convincing to some scholars even than the testimony of the arrangement of the Catacomb cubicula, which have undergone so many changes in the long ages which have passed since they were used as places of assembly for religious worship, are the undoubted references of Prudentius, the well-known Christian poet, who wrote in the second half of the fourth century, very few years, indeed, after the date of the "Peace" of the Church.

When Prudentius wrote, the "use" of the altar-tomb was a very general one, and had evidently been a common "use" in the Church for an indefinitely lengthened period. He writes of the "table" from which is dis-

[1] "I saw *under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held*, and they cried with a loud voice saying, How long, Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? and white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them that they should rest for a little season."—REV. vi. 9–11.

pensed the Eucharistic food "being at the same time the faithful guardian of the Martyrs. It holds, does the table, in its sepulchre, the remains waiting the Eternal Judge, and at the same time it feeds the dwellers on the banks of the Tiber with its sacred feast."[1]

After the period of the adoption of Christianity as the religion of the empire, early in the fourth century, the "tomb" form became more and more general. There were no doubt exceptions. We find, for instance, notices in writers which seem to indicate that in Africa the old table form was still common in the early part of the fifth century; and a Ravenna mosaic of the sixth century represents such an altar, but the "tomb" was adopted as the usual model. The material of which the altar was made followed the same sepulchral type, stone being preferred to wood. In A.D. 517 a canon of the Provincial Council of Epaona (Pamiers, in France) positively forbade the consecration of any other than stone altars. "Altaria nisi lapidea non sacrentur" ran the words of the Epaonic canon. This direction was repeated in the Capitularies of Charlemagne, A.D. 769. In the *Western* Church, in the case of the high altar,[2] this custom grew, till it became of

[1] *Prudentius*, "Peristephanon," Hymn XI. v. 171—

"Illa sacramenti donatrix Mensa, eademque
Custos fida sui martyris adposita.
Servat ad æterni spem judicis ossa sepulchro
Pascit item sanctis Tibricolas dapibus."

And compare too *Prudentius*, Hymn V. v. 515, and also Hymn III. v. 211. The "Peristephanon" is a well-known and striking work which contains fourteen hymns in honour of saints who had received the martyr's crown.

[2] Durandus of Mende (thirteenth century) expressly tells us that the *side altar* might be constructed of wood. The same writer, in his "Symbolism of the Altar," says the altar was of *stone*, because it represents Christ, the corner-stone, &c ("Rationale," Book I., chap. vii. pp. 27, 28).

universal observance. In the *Eastern* Church less attention has ever been paid to the material used.

A yet more marked trace of the original Catacomb tradition has been handed down in the remarkable rule which prevailed all through the Western Mediæval Church, that every altar must contain a relic or relics, thus preserving the original idea that the altar was the actual tomb, was the covering, so to speak, built over the remains of some saintly person; hence the crypt or confession of the early mediæval churches, situated immediately beneath the altar.

In the consecration of all mediæval altars this singular traditional memory of the Catacombs was rigidly observed. the Second Council of Nice, A.D. 787, expressly forbidding the consecration of any altar unless relics were placed under it. We find the same direction recorded in the famous Anglo-Saxon Council at Cealchythe under Bishop Wilfrid. The Cealchythe decree, however, provides an alternative in the event of no "Relic" being procurable. The consecrated Eucharist might in such a case be substituted, "If the Bishop," so runs the decree, "cannot buy other relics, at least he can do this chief thing." Durandus of Mende, in the thirteenth century, in his elaborate directions for the consecration of an altar, lays great stress on the necessity of thus putting a relic or relics in or beneath the altar, and repeats the alternative which allowed the consecrated Eucharist being substituted in cases where no relics could be procured. The Bishop of Mende curiously enough sees in the golden pot of manna placed in the Ark of Covenant an anticipation of this custom in the Jewish Church of the Wilderness.

CHAPTER XXII

THE HOLY TABLE OR ALTAR

(2) *After the "Peace" of the Church* (A.D. 313)

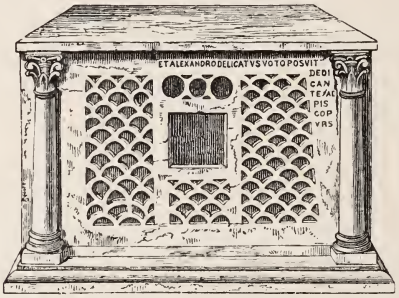
One of the earliest acts of the Christian Emperor Constantine, after his accession to supreme power, was the famous edict of Milan, A.D. 313. The sovereign will of the lord of the fairest portion of the world not only assured to the harassed communities of Christians peace and security, but it virtually imposed upon Roman society a worship hitherto despised, a religion ever growing, and which for three hundred years at times was contemptuously tolerated, at times was remorselessly persecuted. After A.D. 313, Christianity became the official religion of the world-wide empire. At once the dark and semi-hidden chapels, or the chambers and underground corridors of the Catacombs of Rome and a few other centres, such as private oratories and the comparatively few and small churches that existed above ground, were found utterly insufficient, totally unfit, to accommodate the crowds of worshippers who soon began to frequent them. Then under the all-pervading sunshine of imperial favour arose with strange rapidity a crowd of architects and builders, artists in painting and sculpture, and in cunning mosaic-work, eager to devote their talents to the erection and decoration of buildings which were to be devoted to the religious worship professed no longer only

by a community of so-called fanatics, but by the mighty Emperor himself and the great bulk of the composite Roman society.

The century which followed the Edict of Milan (A.D. 313), securing the peace of the Church, witnessed the erection in all parts of the world of Rome of a number of Christian churches, some of vast size and noble proportions. Among these, distinguished for their vastness and grandeur, were the three Roman basilicas, which among all the changing fortunes of the Empire, have ever preserved the first rank among Christian churches—the Basilica of S. John Lateran, the Basilica of S. Paul on the Ostian Way, covering the remains of the apostle of the Gentiles, and chiefest of all, the Vatican Basilica of S. Peter, erected over the tomb of the foremost of the Apostolic College. The lowly altar of the Catacombs, the small tripod, the more common slab of stone or marble covering the martyr's or confessor's lowly grave, and on which in fear and trembling the holy mysteries of the faith had been so often celebrated with hushed voice and hurried ceremony, became under the new state of things the sacred centre of the new and lordly home of Christian prayer and praise.

Changed, too, was the general symbolism which decorated the surroundings of the now stately churches. Before the edict which secured the peace of the Church, the symbolism with which loving Christian hands had somewhat roughly adorned the more sacred parts of their humble chapels and oratories was largely coloured with thoughts of death. This was natural in a society so surrounded with suspicion and hatred, peril, and other deadly persecutions. The grave, its welcome sleep, the rest after toil, the quiet joys of Paradise, the loving

welcome of the soul into the other world by the "Good Shepherd" after the fret and fever of this life were past —pictures of these things were what the Christians of the first three centuries loved to paint and carve on wall and ceiling of their gloomy oratory or chapel. But when the great change under Constantine passed over the Christian community, the dominant thought in the Christian heart was the surpassing glory of Jesus and the victory of His Church. The kingdoms of the world



Altar of S. Alessandro.

had become the kingdoms of God and His Christ. The one prevailing idea of the blessedness of death, the death which to the harassed believer meant life, receded somewhat into the background under the joyousness of the splendour of earthly life under its new conditions. The noble and solemn figure of the Christ blessing men and leaving them His peace, took the place of the Good Shepherd tending the harassed sheep of His little flock, or of the Christ receiving the souls of the wearied and heavy-laden after death. The symbolism painted and carved on the Church of the Catacombs illustrated the

hymns of death, death the friend and the deliverer, or the hymn of the redeemed soul freed from the body. The symbolism of the basilica which after the "Peace" of the Church arose above the catacomb tombs, illustrated the hymn of the Christian victory—pictured the victorious rather than the comforting Christ—the King rather than the Shepherd. But the new symbolism of the basilica, although represented in the highest art, with all the glory and magnificence that Rome in her splendour could bring to the work, lacked the tender grace and the undying hope which often the rough artist and devoted *fossores* brought into the chapels of the catacombs. And the basilican *altar* shared in the mighty change which passed over the Church of the Christian after the "Peace" of A.D. 313. We possess but a dim conception of the appearance of the altar of the Church of the first three centuries.

The altar arrangements of a typical basilica were not of course the result of any suddenly devised plan, but gradually were introduced and developed as time wore on. We find the altar under the shadow of a lofty baldachino or canopy of stone or marble, richly adorned with gold and colour. The altar itself, a slab of marble supported rarely by one, oftener by four short columns, was placed in the middle of the apse, directly above the "confessionary crypt," which contained the tomb of the martyr who gave his name to the church. Just beneath the altar there was frequently a little opening or grating (*fenestella confessionis*), allowing the faithful to catch a glimpse of the sacred sepulchre beneath.

In the basilica the altar or holy table of the divine mysteries was apparently provided with curtains. The custom seems to have been of a venerable antiquity. Some, probably with reason, deduce the idea of the

curtain shrouding the holy table from a realistic interpretation of Paul's words in his first Corinthian letter (ii. 9), "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard . . . the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." Some see in the veil a memory of the veil in the Jerusalem temple which hung before the awful sanctuary. Be this as it may, the curtain shrouding the altar from the gaze of the worshippers belongs to a very remote antiquity in the Christian liturgical story.

Now there appears to have been two distinct methods of arranging these veils in the early churches. The *first* was a veil stretched transversely across the church in front of the sanctuary. The *second* was an arrangement of veils surrounding the altar itself upon all sides.

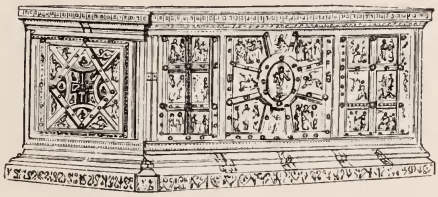
The *first* was the simpler arrangement. The old Lenten veil (*velum quadragesimale*), which in mediæval times in every English church, from the evening of Ash-Wednesday until the Wednesday before Easter, was suspended in front of the sanctuary, is a faithful memory of their early use. The "Iconostasis," or solid wall, with its gold-enriched paintings of the modern Greek Church is a similar memory of this primitive veil.

The *second* use—the arrangement of veils surrounding the altar on all sides—was the one more usually adopted in the basilican church, and which developed into the well-known baldachino.[1] The baldachino is also termed the

[1] "The term baldachino is derived from Baldacco, the Italian equivalent for Bagdad, and Baldachino appears to have been the name used to designate a rich silken fabric manufactured at this place (so 'damask' is derived from the silken fabrics of Damascus). The curtains of 'Bagdad' manufacture gave their name to the erection which was designed to support them. In early wall paintings and mosaics, these curtains are frequently shown knotted round the pillars of the baldachino."—*G. G. Scott*, "History of Church Architecture."

"ciborium," which generally signifies the canopy over the altar, supported upon four pillars. The very general application of the term "ciborium" to the pix or vessel which usually contained the reserved sacrament, belonged to a much later date, and has led to some confusion and misapprehension.[1]

These "curtains" became, in the course of the fourth century, very general. They are mentioned in this age by various writers, notably by Athanasius and Chrysostom. They seem to have been used largely, if not universally, in the churches of the West all through the



Altar of S. Ambrogio, Milan (Ninth Century).

gloomy depression of the sixth, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. We find mention of them in papal records; we see them in pictures, in ivory carvings, and in illuminated MSS., &c. In France, and in countries under French influences, in the course of the thirteenth century, veils in front of the altar grew rarer and rarer, and became confined to the *sides* of the

[1] This well-known term (French, *ciboire*), which came in later times to be used for the pix, originally is an Egyptian name for the husk of a bean, and was used by the Greeks (κιβώριον) to signify a cup or bowl, broad at the bottom and narrow at the top, and from that resemblance possibly it came to be adopted for the tall dome-like canopy erected above the altar.—(So *Suicer*, quoted by Bingham, "Antiquities," viii. vi. 19).

altar, in which position they were very general, while the lofty covering or canopy of the ciborium disappeared altogether, save in parts of Italy, especially in Rome, where we still find it, and in some notable Italian churches, as, for instance, in S. Mark at Venice. In the Eastern Church the "iconostasis," a solid wall covered with pictures, separates the sanctuary from the nave and the ordinary worshippers. The "iconostasis" is pierced by openings termed the holy doors or gates. This takes in the more modern Greek Church the place of the ancient veil.

We have already noticed how, during the first five centuries, altars were indifferently made of wood, marble, or stone. In the Catacomb cubicula the stone or marble slab covering a specially honoured place of sepulture was, as we have seen, often used as an altar. After the peace of the Church, when the altar became the centre of a large and often magnificent building, the material used was sometimes wood, more or less adorned with gold and carved work, but as time advanced, more often of stone. Durandus of Mende mentions only one case where the altar was of *earth*, the "holy table" in question being (traditionally) erected by the three Maries and Martha in a village of Provence. At the Council of Epaonia, A.D. 517, in the pontificate of Hormisdas, it was decreed that no altars should be consecrated except such as were made of stone, and although for a considerable time this decree was only partially complied with, from this date onward stone altars became the rule, and exceptions became rarer and rarer. In England, in A.D. 1549–50, among the more violent reactionary measures, stone altars were universally removed, and wooden tables were substituted in their place.

The order in council directing this substitution is dated November 19, 1550.

In primitive times there appears to have been only one altar in the church. Ignatius (A.D. 107), on more than one occasion in his Epistles, writes of "one bishop and one altar in the church." The practice has not been departed from in the Eastern Church. In the churches of the West, however, a multiplicity of altars became, after the first five centuries, very common. As early as the sixth century, Pope Gregory the Great speaks of a church in which there were as many as thirteen altars, and in the middle ages this number was often largely exceeded. In S. Peter's at Rome, for instance, there are some twenty-six, and in all great churches of the West of the eleventh century and later, the number of altars was very large.

Gradually, after the great revival of the eleventh century, the altars in the West assumed new forms. The canopy and baldachino, so noticeable a feature in the great basilicas of Rome, Constantinople, Ravenna, and other important centres of population, completely disappeared. The only relics of the older type that remained were the curtains arranged on either side. The great change observable in the altars of the West in the churches of the middle ages was the retable. The old position of the bishop and presbyters was behind the altar, which in the basilica stood free and unencumbered in the centre of the sanctuary. This position of the bishop and the clergy present was altered, and the bishop and clergy had their seats arranged in the choir in front of the altar. At first the retable was small and unim-

portant, consisting of little panels usually of wood, carved and painted, occasionally covered with plates of the precious metal, and even encrusted with gems. The fashion of the retable and its subsequent development into the reredos grew rapidly in popularity, probably because it afforded so vast a scope for various kinds of decorative and artistic work.

This permanent addition to the altar made its appearance in some churches in the beginning of the twelfth century, or even at an earlier date. Sometimes the retable assumed the form of a painted triptych, but this was a somewhat later development. As the fourteenth century drew on, the retable was not unfrequently enlarged into a lofty wall of stone enriched with niches and statuary. This was the last development, and the fashion, curiously enough, has been generally revived in our own days, especially in the Anglican communion. It is generally known as the reredos.

In Italy, however, and particularly in Rome, the custom of the early ages still lives. No reredos or even retable adorns or disfigures the High altar of the Vatican basilica of S. Peter's.

We have already alluded to the practice, which was not uncommon in the twelfth century, of erecting immediately behind the principal altar of an important abbey or church a raised and elaborately ornamented platform, on which was placed a coffin, chest, or reliquary, often covered with plates of silver, of gold, or otherwise richly adorned. In this reliquary were deposited the remains of the saint especially honoured in the church in question, and which in earlier times had rested in the crypt below, thus exhibiting to the worshippers what before had been invisible, or at most only dimly seen through the narrow grating

which sometimes existed just below the altar, a window, so to speak, of the crypt. Such an erection rising immediately behind gave a great prominence to the principal altar of the church, and enhanced its dignity and importance.

On the whole, dating roughly from the period of the great awakening of the Church in the eleventh century, the altar, generally speaking, in size, form, and decoration, made a marked and striking advance, and this was especially noticeable as the middle ages wore on.

The altar in the basilica was a very different thing from the comparatively simple and plain holy table of the primitive Church; but the magnificent altar of the twelfth and following centuries, with its gorgeous reredos, or with its elaborate shrine glittering with gold and colour, towering immediately behind it, was a great and singular development of the canopied holy table of the basilica of the fifth and following centuries. The basilican altar would scarcely have been recognised in its gorgeous and striking mediæval successor.

And as in the altar itself, so gradually in the sacred ornaments placed upon it a curious change in "use" has to be chronicled. Certainly, for the first nine or ten centuries of the Christian era, nothing was suffered *upon* the sacred table save the book containing the Gospels—no cross or crucifix, no candelabra, no flowers. A curious legend bearing on this is preserved to us from the records of that wonderful abbey of Cluny, whence, as we have related, sprang the marvellous revivifying influence which awoke the Church from its long death-like lethargy. Berno, abbot of Cluny (tenth century), when the great abbey was in its infancy, relates how, on the altar of S. Gauburge,

a church in the neighbourhood of his abbey, the relics of S. Gauburge were placed *upon* the altar, and how the saint appeared in a dream to a sick person who had in vain prayed for assistance in sickness. The reason, said the saint, that no answer was vouchsafed to prayer was owing to the desecration of the altar through the relics of decaying mortality being laid on so sacred a place. This curious legend by no means stands alone, and shows us what was the reverential spirit in which our fathers originally guarded the simplicity of the table of the Lord.

In the thirteenth century, however, this old, almost austere simplicity had given place to a different state of things. Durandus of Mende, in his "Rationale," dwells at some length upon the sacred ornaments placed on the altar in his time, and explains in his customary ingenious, but somewhat far-fetched way, their symbolism. His chapter on the "Mediæval Altar," tells us what was the general use in churches in his time—the second half of the thirteenth century.

These ornaments or sacred furniture placed on the altar, according to the learned bishop of Mende, though marking an increase on the earlier use, were few in number, and evidently simple in character. After detailing the sorrounding ornaments, such as hangings, curtains, golden fringes, crosses, books, &c., Durandus proceeds to speak of the things which were absolutely placed *upon* the altar itself. These include the "Capsa," a chest or coffer in which was kept the consecrated "Host." This sacred chest was made indifferently of wood, of white ivory, of crystal, sometimes of gold (sometimes it served as the case for the unconsecrated wafer). In addition to the "capsa," Durandus speaks of the custom

of placing a little reliquary, made of some precious material, in which was enshrined the ashes or relics of some departed saint; but in his passage treating of the special symbolic reference of the "reliquaries," he hints at the "doubtfulness" of the propriety of their presence in this holy place. At the corners of the altar were placed two candlesticks (with the candles lit), and in the middle, between the candles, stood the Cross. In addition to these few objects, the Book of the Gospels was always found on the holy table.

Among the more curious and interesting symbolic references suggested here by our famous mediæval theologian is the one put forth on the subject of the "capsa" or coffer holding the consecrated Host, which Durandus tells us signifies the body of the glorious Virgin. The two lighted candles, he considered, typified the gladness of the two peoples (the Jews and the Gentiles) who rejoiced at the Nativity of Christ. He dwells in several passages on the symbolism of these "lights," but *this* is evidently his central thought here.

Although Durandus of Mende expressly makes mention of the coffer containing the consecrated Host having its place *upon* the altar, eminent liturgical scholars,[1] consider that during the earlier Middle Ages the more common custom was to place the reserved Eucharist in a box hung *over* the altar, this box being sometimes in the form of a tower, or a cup, but even more frequently representing a dove hovering over the altar. This latter, "the dove," was, for instance, the use of the great abbatial

[1] Notably J B. Thiers, in his learned treatise "On the Principal Altars of Churches" (Thiers wrote in A.D. 1688). With the conclusions of Thiers, Viollet le Duc, in his exhaustive article "Autel," vol. ii. ("Dictionnaire"), generally concurs.

church of Cluny. The term "ciborium"[1] (ciboire) began gradually to be generally applied to this box, tower, or dove. No doubt this term was used for the dove, or tower, as the old basilican ciborium or lofty canopy over the altar entirely passed out of use in the mediæval churches of the West.

The dove hovering over the altar appears to have been a very ancient ornament. We read, even as early as A.D. 536, how Severus, Bishop of Antioch, was accused at the Council of Constantinople of diverting to his own profit certain treasures of the church, notably the *silver and gold doves* that hung over the altar.

The custom of keeping the reserved sacrament in a vessel suspended over the altar is referred to in the "Rites of Durham," which present to us in modern phraseology, a photograph, so to speak, of a great mediæval church just before the Reformation. In the "Rites" this vessel is called the pix. The passage runs thus: "A marvellous faire pix that the blessed sacrament did hange in, which was of most pure fine gold, most curiously wrought of goldsmith work . . . the crooke that the pix did hang on was of gold, and the cords that did draw it upp and downe were made of fine white strong silke."

Time went on, and gradually the altar lost altogether its original simple appearance. Flowers, real and even artificial, made their appearance, and were piled often

[1] Another curious use of "ciborium" is found in architectural terminology, where it is sometimes used to designate a bay or compartment of a vaulted ceiling. It is there commonly spelt "Severey," or "Civery," or "Cibory," each compartment of a vaulted ceiling resembling somewhat the old basilican canopy or ciborium. Ducange tells us that in Auvergne "cibory" is used for a vaulted tomb. (*Cf.* Parker's "Glossary of Architecture," *s.v.* "Severy.")

tastelessly upon the sacred table. Certainly, for the first twelve centuries, said the last learned editor of Durandus's "Rationale," writing in A.D. 1854, no flowers were ever placed *on* the altar. This strange and now general custom in the West appears to have been derived from an ancient practice of placing flowers on certain martyrs' tombs, and of carrying these thence to the sick, in the hope that some miraculous virtue was attached to these flowers thus hallowed by their contact with a sacred tomb.

Thiers, the well-known liturgical writer (A.D. 1688), above quoted, writes with extraordinary bitterness on the later innovations connected with the altar and its furniture, which he speaks of as the work of feeble-minded men of bad taste, whose zeal was far greater than their light, and who were utterly destitute of all reverence for Christian antiquity. Viollet le Duc takes up the same strain, and sadly comments on the melancholy progress of this deterioration, on the gradual falling away from the venerable and awe-ful simplicity which once characterised the altars of Catholic churches, their ornaments, furniture, and fittings. This regrettable change, due to various reasons, slowly gathered strength as the Middle Ages wore on. What would the learned Thiers have said, wrote Viollet le Duc in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Thiers who mourned in 1688 over the lamentable falling away from primitive simplicity so manifest in *his* day, could he have seen what we see now, and lament over in the noblest Roman Catholic cathedrals; instancing the tawdry and irreverent spectacles presented by the altars of such venerable and well-known houses of prayer as the mighty cathedrals of Chartres, Amiens, and Nôtre Dame of Paris!

The White Robe of Churches

In this little study on the story of the altar and its changes all through the Christian ages, it will be observed that while the term "altar" has been generally

Altar of St. Denis (after a painting by Van Eyck).

used it has been alternated with another appellation, "table." This generally represents Christian usage in the matter of terminology here. Both terms have been, and will always continue to be used, but it is indisputable

that the general language of Christians in all times has been favourable to the use of the term altar. The following may be taken as a summary of the practice of our fathers here. In the New Testament we find *both words* in the writings of S. Paul. In 1 Cor. x. 21, the apostle speaks of "The table of the Lord." In Heb. xiii. 10, he writes as follows: "We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." In the sub-apostolic age the fathers in the East and West invariably wrote of "the altar"; so Ignatius in several passages. A little later, we find the same term "altar" in the treatises of Irenæus, Tertullian, and Origen. Cyprian, in the third century, uses both words "altar" and "table," more usually, however, preferring the first appellation. Chrysostom, a representative writer of the Eastern Church, on the contrary (end of the fourth century), most commonly prefers the word "table," which he terms the mystical, the tremendous, the spiritual, the heavenly table. S. Augustine, a representative writer of the Western Church (end of the fourth century), also usually prefers the term table. "The table of the Lord" is a favourite expression with the great Latin father. Indeed this was the common use among the writers and Church leaders of the latter end of the fourth and fifth century.

The significant omission of the term "altar" from the Anglican Book of Common Prayer tells us that the Reformers desired to give up the word "altar" for fear of appearing to sanction the mediæval teaching on the matter of the sacrifice of the mass. But the language of Christians in the East and West while admitting, as we have seen in the language of her greatest teachers,

that the words "altar" and "table" were certainly interchangeable, has on the whole in early and later times been generally favourable to the alternative use of the term altar.

Very nobly and lucidly Bishop Andrewes, whose memory is justly revered in the Anglican communion as a great historic theologian, thus handles the question of the nomenclature of the place where the holy rite is celebrated. In a sermon preached A.D. 1612, he is speaking of the Eucharist that answereth to the sacrifice of the Passover, and argues that neither in the case of the Jew nor the Christian could the Passover or the Eucharist be termed "in rigour of speech a sacrifice" (which would be required properly to justify the term "altar"), there being only one sacrifice *veri nominis*, properly so called, that is Christ's death. Before this offering, the hope of it was kept alive by the prefiguration of it by the Jewish Church; after it is past, the memory of it is kept alive by the commemoration of it by the Christian Church. . . . Hence what name their Church carried, our Church does the like, and the Fathers make no scruple of it; no more need we. Andrewes then quotes S. Paul's words, "We have an altar."

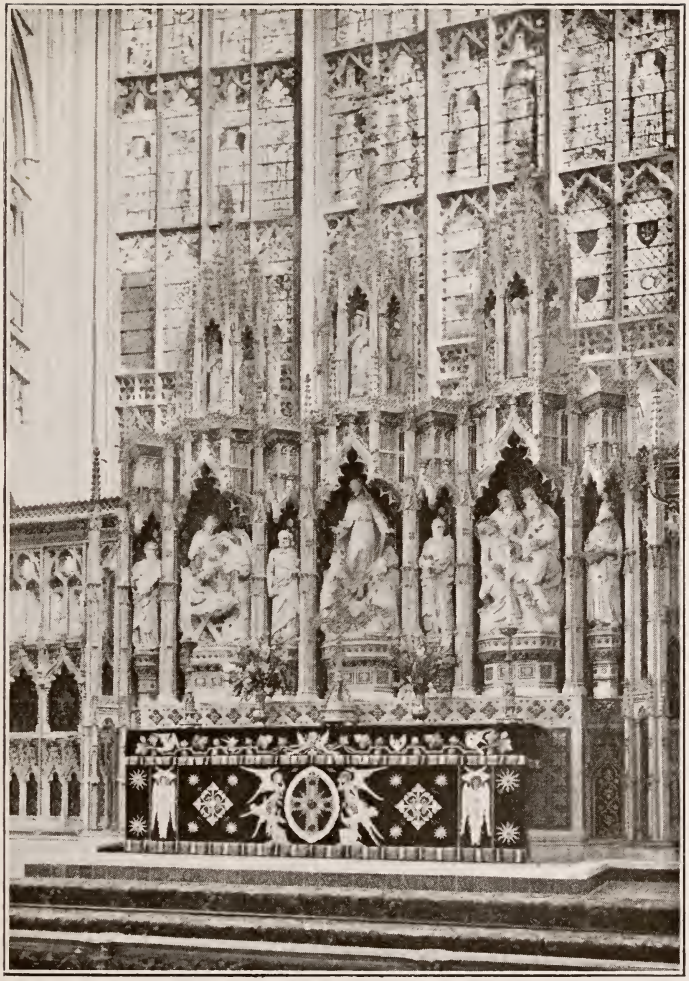
In the English cathedral and abbey church, the hands of the reformers of the sixteenth century have indeed left us but scanty remains of the elaborate and often splendid altars of the Middle Ages, and their destructive work was thoroughly completed by the Puritan and Independent in the days of Oliver Cromwell and his rough lieutenants. With the doctrines associated, not unnaturally, in the minds of these earnest men with the altars of the mediæval church, it does not enter into the scheme of this little study to concern itself. The loyal member

of the Anglican communion, while deeply thankful to Bishop Ridley and his coadjutors for their noble and faithful work in restoring a truer and more scriptural Eucharistic teaching, may be forgiven, however, for deploring the spirit of these learned and devoted men which led them to destroy so much that was venerable and historical in the sanctuary arrangements of the English churches. The excuse which at once suggests itself for this regrettable policy on the part of these earnest men amounts to this: they were carried away in the stress and passion of the troublous times in which they lived and worked, when instead of purifying, they too often destroyed. Their policy in the matter of doctrine and church government was very different. In these all-important points they were most conservative, preserving all that was possible to be preserved, maintaining, in all essential points, with extreme carefulness the "continuity" of the Church of England. In the fabric portion of the sanctuary of the church, alas, they too often destroyed and swept away. There were many things done in that age of passion and distress which viewed in the calm light of reason are deeply regrettable; among them the wanton destruction of the mediæval altars must be surely classed.

Hence it comes to pass that the holy table or the altar in such a church as the cathedral of Gloucester —and the case of Gloucester is repeated in all the cathedrals and abbey churches of England—is new, possessing no charm of antiquity, no associations historical or ecclesiastical which connect it with a remote past. It is simply a massive wooden table. But the "table" aspect disappears under the costly covering, and it presents, in common with the great majority of altars

or holy tables in churches of the Anglican communion, the appearance of a veiled "tomb." The favourite late mediæval fashion of a lofty stone reredos, carved and gilded, is followed in most important churches. The two candlesticks, the cross in the centre, are the only ornaments. On the whole the sanctuary of an Anglican cathedral, such as Gloucester, now presents a reverent and decorous spectacle, and is a striking contrast to the gawdy and meretricious appearance of the later Roman Catholic altars, and is a fair representation of what an altar was in the thirteenth and following centuries, probably even of a somewhat older type.

Such a return to the decorous "use" hallowed by the practice of an almost immemorial antiquity, is a joy not only to the antiquary and historian; but what is of deeper moment far to all thoughtful serious persons who love and revere the Anglican communion, and rejoice in her beautiful liturgy, is her comprehensive Catholic teaching, is her ritual at once solemnly impressive yet studiedly simple, is her continuity with the pre-reformation Catholic church of the West, in all things save in her mediæval additions and curious errors. But when all this is granted, a feeling of deep regret still lingers in many devout hearts, for the *old* altar, the *old* holy table, with its solemn touching memories of centuries of prayer and praise, is gone? Very sad thoughts cluster round the irrevocable loss; we *might* have kept it unharmed, well-nigh untouched. Purged from the grave errors which disfigured the mediæval practices, and later teachings, the old altar would have still been the most revered object in our venerable churches, abbeys, and cathedrals.



GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

The Altar and Reredos

The Piscina

PISCINA

In mediæval churches the "piscina," as a rule placed on the "epistle" or south side of the altar, is a general and conspicuous feature. It does not, however, appear to have belonged to primitive Christian antiquity. The earliest notice that we possess of a piscina is found in an instruction of Pope Leo IV. in the ninth century addressed to bishops, *circa* A.D. 847, in which the pontiff directs that a place be arranged near the altar into which the water, which has been used to rinse the sacred vessels used in the celebration of the Eucharist, may be poured away.[1]

The credence, with the piscina, De Caumont, in his "Abécédaire" (vol. i. "Architecture Réligieuse), considers, replaced the recesses or cupboards (almeries) which previously as a rule were arranged on either side of the altar. These piscinæ were, however, rare even as late as the twelfth century, but in the thirteenth century they appear to have become general. In this century (the thirteenth), they are for the most part double, that is to say, there are two basins and drains within the niche, with very often a wooden or stone shelf above, which served the purpose of a "credence" table to receive certain of the sacred vessels used in the service of the mass, previous to their being required at the holy table or altar.

About the middle of the fourteenth century, the double piscina very usually gave place to a single piscina, con-

[1] The words of the Instruction of Pope Leo IV. in question are as follows: "Locus in secretario, aut juxta altare sit præparatus, ubi aqua effundi possit, quando vasa sacra abluunter, et ibi linteum nididum cum aqua dependeat, ut ibi sacerdos manus lavet, post communionem."

taining one basin instead of two. In the fifteenth century, the piscina became rarer and rarer. Most of the beautiful piscinæ that remain to us in mediæval churches thus date from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. They are very varied in shape and ornamentation. In many cases they display the most elaborate fancies of the Gothic artists of the best period of the middle ages.

The reasons for their introduction, multiplication, development, and subsequent gradual disappearance, appear to be as follows:—

It seems clear that for many centuries no special arrangements of a structural nature for the cleansing of the sacred vessels used in the Eucharistic service existed in churches, and even after the "instruction" of Leo IV., they do not seem to have been introduced, at all events generally, for no very early examples can be cited, nor does it appear to have been anywhere the practice for the priest in early times to consume the rinsings even of the cup. The "double piscina" clearly shows this. A very early testimony to the exact use of this double basin exists in the ancient customs of Cluny (eleventh century), where one piscina was used, we read, for cleansing the chalice; the other was used by the celebrant for washing his hands after the mass.

The use of Citeaux (Cistercian, twelfth century), however, required the celebrant to drink the rinsings of the chalice, which was apparently cleansed with wine, not with water. The customs, however, in the matter of cleansing the sacred vessels used in the Eucharist—no one "use" prevailing—were clearly different in the various centres, until the time of Pope Innocent III. at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Pope Innocent III. directed that the rinsings should be con-

sumed by the celebrant, and this direction clearly was first issued in the age which taught, or at all events stereotyped, a somewhat novel doctrine respecting the Eucharistic elements.

But the consumption of the rinsings of the sacred vessels by the priest, even after the direction of Pope Innocent III., for a long time was evidently not by any means universally adopted, for a number of double piscinæ continued to be constructed all through the thirteenth, and even in the fourteenth, century. But gradually the practice of consuming the rinsings of the Eucharistic vessels grew, until it became general, so general that, in the fifteenth century, the double piscina ceased to be constructed, and even the piscina containing a single basin, now no longer of any use, was rarely arranged for in any new church-building work commenced in that period.

The influence of the doctrine of transubstantiation, to use the term subsequently adopted, a doctrine first taught in the course of the ninth century, very generally received in the eleventh, put out as an article of faith in the Western Church early in the thirteenth century, is thus apparent in these structural additions in the sanctuary of a church, additions which were rendered necessary by the introduction of a more elaborate Eucharistic ritual.

The final disuse of the piscina in the last of the mediæval ages marks the general introduction of a practice, that of carefully consuming the rinsings, which apparently was unknown for many centuries after the establishment of the peace of the church, A.D. 313.[1]

[1] Compare, for further details, *De Caumont*, "Abécédaire, Architecture Réligieuse," pp. 363, 532, 619, 691; *Viollet le Duc*, "Dictionaire de l'Architecture," vol. vii. *s.v.*; and *Parker*, "Glossary," vol. i. *s.v.*

CHAPTER XXIII

THE LADY CHAPEL

The great cathedral of Gloucester, which has generally throughout our study supplied us with good examples of most of those different portions of a mediæval abbey, whose history, use, and origin we have been tracing, at its eastern end does not terminate with the semicircular un-English apse which is formed by the broad ambulatory or aisles which run round the choir, and the pile which forms the altar and its adjacent chamber or feretory. At the extreme east end, immediately behind the great altar, the mighty wall of glass, the east window, which soars over the altar, and floods the choir with its tender silvery light, is pierced with a broad arched entrance which opens into a vestibule, the principal decorative feature of which is a beautiful roof with fan-tracery vaulting. Beyond this vestibule, the stranger visiting the cathedral for the first time is astonished to see before him another church, as it seems, of considerable size, how large[1] is at first uncertain, so exquisite are its proportions. This church or chapel was erected in the last years of the mediæval period to the honour, we might almost say for the worship, certainly for the veneration, of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

[1] Some idea can be gathered of the vast size of this Lady Chapel from the rough computation that a congregation of some four or five hundred persons can be accommodated on the ground floor of this striking and exquisite addition to the east limb of the cathedral.

The Lady Chapel

Of all the strange mediæval errors, emphatically this cult of the Blessed Virgin was the saddest, perhaps the most inexplicable. We will endeavour very briefly to trace its genesis and its curious development. Nothing that was accomplished in the work of the Reformation was so important, so far-reaching in its character and influence, as was the restoration of the position which the Virgin Mother of our Lord occupied in the teaching of the primitive Church. Blessed indeed among women was Mary, but emphatically nothing more.

The date of the first appearance in the Church of this mistaken and exaggerated estimate of the Virgin Mother is uncertain. All signs of it are absent in the New Testament. It was certainly unknown in Apostolic and sub-Apostolic times. And when a new feeling as to the position of the Virgin appeared in the liturgies of the Church, it was of a nature widely different from the mediæval estimate of Mary. To take a well-known example. In the very ancient Liturgy of S. John Chrysostom, still in use in the Eastern Church, the Virgin Mary is prayed for. In this venerable liturgy we read: "We offer unto Thee (God the Father) this reasonable service for the faithful dead, our forefathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles . . . martyrs, confessors . . . but especially for our most holy, immaculate, ever blessed Lady the Mother of God, and ever Virgin Mary." This most ancient liturgy, in the form we now find it, has no doubt been altered and somewhat added to since the days of Chrysostom, in the later years of the fourth century; but certainly not in the direction of lowering the position of the Virgin, a position which in the teaching of the Eastern Church grew more and more exalted as the ages passed, till such a place of eminence was ascribed to her, that no loftier one, *outside the*

Blessed Trinity, is conceivable. Similar testimony is given in the ancient liturgies of SS. Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, and Cyril.

Very exalted indeed was the estimation in which the Virgin was held in the Eastern Church in the first half of the sixth century, when in the great building age of the Emperor Justinian many noble churches arose, dedicated to the "Mother of God." But though in the West the development of Mariolatry was slower, it gradually became even more accentuated than in the East. From the time of Gregory the Great, early in the seventh century, the honour paid to the Virgin Mother in Christian worship became more definite. But it was not until the era of the wonderful awakening of the eleventh century that the grave doctrinal error which was so sternly and justly reprobated by all the teachers of the Reformation came into marked prominence.

In the last half of that eleventh century we find Peter Damiani, bishop and cardinal, a teacher of vast influence, positively writing of Mary as exalted to the throne of God the Father, and placed in the very seat of the Trinity.

But still this utterly unauthorised [1] addition to Christian dogma needed some great popular movement to introduce it into what may be termed the every-day religious life of the people. Curiously enough, this impetus, which, so

[1] The words of Dr. Pusey are very remarkable, and, coming from such a source, peculiarly interesting: "There are very serious things in the Roman communion, which ought to keep us where we are. I would instance chiefly the system as to the Blessed Virgin as the mediatrix and dispenser of all present blessings to mankind. (*I think nothing short of a fresh Revelation could justify this.*)"—Canon Liddon's "Life of Dr. Pusey," vol. ii. chap. xxxiv. p. 505. And again Pusey writes, p. 506: "I cannot think all this, so different from what one finds in the early centuries, can be right."

to speak, popularised the strange cult, seems to have been given by the Crusades, those marvellous religious wars which took so mighty a hold of the popular imagination during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

One result of the crusading fever, that curious fusion of religion and war, was the production of a new character on the stage of the world of the West. "The ideal knight of the Crusades and of chivalry, uniting all the force and fire of the ancient warrior with all the tenderness and humility of the Christian saint. This new character sprang from the conjunction of the two streams of religious and military feeling; and although this ideal was a creature of the imagination, although it was rarely or never perfectly realised in life, yet it remained the type and model of warlike excellence to which many generations aspired."[1]

Chivalry, at least the religious aspect which chivalry assumed in all its acts, language, and ceremonies, may be said fairly to have been the result of the Crusades, for before the Crusades, chivalry, if it may be considered to have existed at all, appears to have had no special reference to religion. But war was now sanctified by religion, and men were taught that the noblest end to which they could dedicate their lives, was the rescue of the Redeemer's sepulchre at Jerusalem from the power of the infidel conqueror, the disciple of the false prophet Mahommed.

The inescapable duty of a Christian knight was self-devotion for others, especially for the defenceless and weak; thus courtesy towards, and the protection of, the weaker sex became the imperative duty, as well as the

[1] See *Lecky*, "History of European Morals," chap. iv., and *Milman*, "Latin Christianity," Book xiv. chap. xi.

privilege of knighthood. Second then only to religious devotion, ranked gallantry among the principles of knighthood. The love of God and the ladies was enjoined as the paramount duties in the teachings of chivalry. In this strange confusion of ideas, this almost passionate devotion to the female sex took a religious tone. There was one lady of whom, high above and beyond all, every knight was the vowed servant, the Virgin Mother of the Saviour, the rescue of whose hallowed sepulchre was the primary object of the Crusades. Thus the adoration of the Virgin, long taught by theologians, became strangely popularised among the Crusaders of all ranks and orders, and through them among all western peoples who made up, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the vast armies of the Cross, and their popular devotion to the Virgin continued to grow through the Middle Ages, till it influenced and coloured Christian worship in all parts of Western Christendom.

Religious chivalry, that outcome of the Crusades, seemed "to array the Christian world as the church militant of the Virgin, and it was to her the knight looked especially for success in battle." From the soldier to the people was but a little step, and very soon this sentiment of adoration became universal. The Redeemer passed gradually into a more remote and awful Godhead; the Virgin seemed a nearer and more familar object of adoration. And art, which in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in the splendid glass-painting as well as in sculpture which in these centuries had made vast progress, contributed in no small degree to the popularisation of the strange cult. With a saddening rapidity the worship of "Our Lady," as she was commonly

termed, became the worship of Western Christendom. Soon every cathedral and abbey, every spacious church, had its "Mary" Chapel. Hymns were written and everywhere sung in her honour. Liturgies in which her name was the principal feature were introduced. Manuals of private and of public devotion, in which the name of "Mary the Mother" was conspicuous above every name, were copied and re-copied a thousand times in every monastic scriptorium or cloister. A new and startling theological addition was thus generally added to popular Christian teaching. "The incommunicable attributes of the Godhead were assigned to Mary. She was represented as sitting between the cherubim and seraphim, as commanding by her maternal influence, if not by authority, her Eternal Son."[1] The idea of "Queen of Heaven" became a familiar one in popular theology, and before the fifteenth century had run its course, the new devotion, largely called into being by the Crusades, showed the mighty hold it had obtained over the popular mind by the erection and lavish adornment of such splendid and costly shrines as the great Lady Chapel of Gloucester.

Among the changes which passed over the Church of England at the period of the Reformation in the first half of the sixteenth century, none, perhaps, was so needful, none to which the true theologian must give such unstinting praise, as that which swept out of the formularies and liturgies of the Church every trace of that strange, unnatural, untrue cult of one who, exalted and supremely blessed though she be, yet possesses no title whatever to worship, no claim to the adoration of Christian people.

[1] See *Milman*, "Latin Christianity," Book xiv. chap. xi.

The White Robe of Churches

In the early Middle Ages, after the rehabilitation of the monastic orders, and the consequent great awakening of the Western Church in the eleventh century, perhaps the most interesting chapter in the Church's history is filled with the wonderful recital of the coming of the mendicant orders early in the thirteenth century, among whom the Dominicans and Franciscans were by far the most numerous and influential. Now the cult of the Virgin received an enormous impulse through the teaching of these great orders. Wide-spread, indeed, in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries was the influence exercised by these mendicant friars over the masses of the people. And in the theology of both the two great communities of mendicants, the Virgin Mary occupied a peculiar and lofty position. The Franciscan teaching loved ever to give greater prominence to the childhood than to the manhood of Christ, and, alas, too often to exalt the mother at the expense of the Son, and this teaching sank deep into the hearts of the people, among whom the Franciscan friars, for the three centuries preceding the Reformation, exercised an enormous influence.

If it were possible, the other great mendicant order, the Dominican, which rose to influence simultaneously with the Franciscan, professed a yet greater devotion to Mary than did their brother order. Dominic, their almost adored founder, was proudly styled the adopted son of the Blessed Virgin, who was ever regarded as the special protectress of the Dominicans.

It was to Dominic, according to the cherished traditions of the order, that Mary revealed herself, commanding her devoted servant "to make known to the world that form of prayer (the Rosary) which thenceforth [that

is from the years 1212–1215] was in future to become, alike among rich and poor, the badge of Catholic devotion."[1] The Rosary—that curious form of prayer with the refrain, "Ave Maria" (hail, Mary), repeated again and again, "a prayer which has maintained in Roman Catholic countries its wonderful popularity to our own days and times, and which has done more to perpetuate the cult of the so-called 'Queen of Heaven' among the people than all the rhapsodies of mystics, or learned treatises of doctors, or authoritative pronouncements of the Roman See."

Still this sad heresy, it is clear, with its ever-multiplying exaggerations and developments—for by this grave epithet of heresy the writer of the present little study does not hesitate to brand this awful and soul-destroying innovation on primitive teaching—excited, even in the minds of some of the more famous devotees of the new cult, now and again, qualms and hesitations. Bernard of Clairvaux (twelfth century), the glory of the mighty Cistercian order, perhaps the greatest and truest monk that ever lived, while professing the deepest tenderness, affection, and admiration for the mother of his Lord, wrote in a spirit of indignant remonstrance against the doctrine of the "Immaculate Conception of the Virgin,"[2] a doctrine defined and clothed with Papal authority in A.D. 1854.

Again, in A.D. 1520, the great liturgical (Roman) reformer, Quignon, Cardinal of Santa Croce, under the

[1] "Life of S. Dominic," by A. T. Drane, a work sanctioned by the authority of the Roman Catholic Church in 1891.

[2] "Are we more instructed," wrote Bernard of Clairvaux (born A.D. 1091), "or more devout than the fathers. . . . It is perilous presumption in us, when their prudence in such things is exceeded. *The royal Virgin needs no fictitious honours.*"

warrant of Pope Clement VII., produced a reformed breviary *in which the offices of the Virgin were omitted.* This breviary of Quignon was at first accepted in many Roman Catholic dioceses in various countries, but was suppressed by the Council of Trent.

We have already touched upon the testimony which "art" bears to the growth of this new dogma. Its silent witness is painted on the glorious glass windows of the twelfth and following centuries. It is graved on the beautiful statues which adorn the many noble mediæval churches which remain to us, eloquent in their inimitable beauty and grace. And "art," be it remembered, is ever the faithful expression of the popular belief. It is noticeable, in the first place, how very many of the great religious buildings, which arose in the twelfth and following century, were placed under the protection of Mary and solemnly dedicated to her. Now we possess a vast number of Christian sarcophagi, more or less elaborately adorned, belonging to the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries. Scarcely before the ninth century in these adornments do we find any presentment of the Virgin. If she appears at all on the carved ornamentation of these sarcophagi, it is in a position positively of less importance than that occupied by the apostles. Not until the twelfth century do we find in "art" the crowned and royally apparelled Mary so familiar to us in mediæval glass and sculpture. This novel presentment of the Virgin was brought from the Eastern Church by the Crusaders. But in the earlier examples that of the infant Saviour in the Virgin's arms still is the important figure. Gradually a change in these sacred figures is noticeable, and the infant Jesus becomes gradually of less importance. The Virgin is *the* centre

of the group. It is on *her*, not the divine infant, that the eyes of the beholder rest. Crowned with a royal crown, with the lily sceptre in her hand, in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, she appears in unnumbered instances, alike in jewelled window as on the pale grey carven porch of the house of God—unmistakably as the liturgies and hymns were everywhere teaching—"the Queen of Heaven." [1]

The "Lady Chapel" of Gloucester is a notable instance of the hold which the cult of the Virgin Mary had obtained over men's hearts before the close of the Middle Ages.

This ornate and magnificent addition to the Benedictine

[1] "The mediæval Church held seven festivals in honour of the Virgin Mary. The two oldest of these are founded on the Gospel history, and are pure expressions of reverence for her who is 'blessed among women,' if indeed they may not also be regarded as festivals of our Lord Himself. The reformers of our offices accordingly retained these two commemorations, viz. (1) *The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (March 25), commonly known as 'Lady Day.' This festival dates probably from the fifth century; (2) *The Purification of S. Mary the Virgin* (February 2), which dates back certainly to the sixth century. This second feast of our Church has, however, an alternative name, which places it in another category of Church festivals, viz., 'The Presentation of Christ in the Temple,' by which appellation the feast is known in the Eastern Church."

The other *five festivals* held in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the mediæval Church, which were expunged from our Prayer Book by the reformers of the sixteenth century, were (1) The *Assumption* (August 15), founded upon a legend of the fifth century, but not adopted by the Western Church until the ninth century. The *Visitation* (July 2), introduced in the fourteenth century. The Virgin's *Nativity*, observed by the Eastern Church at the close of the seventh century, but not introduced into the West till long afterwards. The *Presentation of Mary* (November 21), apparently brought into the Western Church about the fourteenth century. The *Immaculate Conception* (December 8), which was only sanctioned by the Council of Basle in the fifteenth century.—(Compare *Proctor*, "History of the Book of Common Prayer," chap. ii. pp. 278–79).

abbey of S. Peter's, Gloucester, was commenced in A.D. 1470, and completed, as far as the masonry is concerned, and probably the elaborate tracery of the interior walls, in A.D. 1499. Most of the statuary with which it was intended the countless niches should be filled, and the complete colouring of its walls and roof, were works apparently never fully carried out. The troublous times which culminated in the suppression of the Benedictine house of Gloucester, and all the other monasteries and religious communities in England, roughly dating from A.D. 1530–1540, no doubt put an effectual stop to any further elaborate designs of the kind. The windows, however, large and small, to the number of twenty-five, were completed, and from the remains we yet possess, we see that the monk-artists had filled them entirely with exquisite stained glass. Many traces of colour, still plainly visible, tell us that at least the lower walls of the chapel had received their rich colouring ornamentation before the threatenings of the coming dissolution of the monasteries paralysed all the monks' designs further to beautify this latest addition to their proud abbey church.

As far as we can trace, only a portion of the statues with which the designer proposed to fill the countless niches which, panel-like, fill the whole surface of the walls, were ever completed.

And the remains of the beautiful tender colouring which the great unknown master planned as the decoration of the many canopies which crown the panelled niches in this superb Mary Chapel, can only be *certainly* traced as far as the lower lights of the great windows. It may be that the artist stayed his hand for a season, wishful first to mark the effect of the vast windows when

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

The Lady Chapel

filled with jewelled glass. It is possible that he dreamed of a new effect, somewhat different from the usual mediæval setting of coloured and gilded stone—of pure *white* walls richly carved—as a setting to great windows ablaze with colour; a silver setting to countless sparkling gems—ruby, sapphire, and amethyst. The east window of our Mary Chapel, broken and defaced though it be, with the design utterly lost, with its rich and matchless tints, gives us some hint as to the splendour of the stained glass which once filled the Mary windows. Such a design which largely omitted the usual lavish expenditure of colour on the panelled walls was possible, for it must be remembered that the Gloucester Lady Chapel, with its huge windows, is a very palace of glass, and the monk-artist may have planned the whole design with a view to an effective and somewhat novel setting to what was after all *the* feature of this almost last effort of the great Benedictine order in England.

Still, it is on the whole an open question, the design of the wall decoration here immediately round the great windows; not so the groined ceiling. The ceiling of this noble Mary Chapel has been justly described as "one of the grandest Perpendicular roofs that has ever been made." Each boss—and these bosses are seemingly countless—in the elaborate lierne vaulting is worthy of minute inspection. With three exceptions, they are all charming representations of foliage, delicately and exquisitely carved out of solid stone. There is no doubt here that, had time been given, this pale white ceiling would, like the almost similar choir roof, have been clothed with gold enrichments, and with delicate lines of colour.

As might have been expected, in the reaction of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, and in the yet more passionate and thoughtless zeal of the Puritan soldiers in the seventeenth century, the Mary Chapel suffered more than the nave and choir of the famous Gloucester abbey.

Very real was the sorrowful indignation of the Reformers of Edward VI., and later of the Puritans, when the terrible error of the "Mary" cult burst upon the minds of men to whom the New Testament and its teaching had become familiar and exceedingly precious; and alas, these earnest but often misguided men wreaked their wild fury upon shrines which in their eyes appeared at least to sanction a form of worship they felt was false; but oh, the pity of it, they destroyed instead of simply purifying. Under Edward VI. and his counsellors the statuary was torn down, and the glorious windows of our Lady Chapel were heedlessly broken; while about a century later the soldiers of the Commonwealth completed the sad task of destruction. The fatal work was too thoroughly carried out. The reredos behind the vanished altar, once a marvel of grace and beauty, once exquisitely carved and painted, once a very dream of beauty and charm, now stands a sorrowful and disfigured wreck. The canopies and the exquisite tracery on the walls, too, are hacked and disfigured just as high up as the pikes and swords of the stern soldiers of the Parliament could reach, and *no higher*. The work of destruction was evidently in its last scenes a hurried one, and was probably stayed by the interposition of wiser and more thoughtful minds. But the fair building was wrecked, and for more than two centuries and a half, dating from the second period of destruction in the days of the Commonwealth,

has remained desolate and sadly neglected in its scarred and pathetic beauty.[1]

If at the east end of the choir of Aldred's or of Serlo, the friend of Lanfranc, there was a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary, which is however doubtful, that chapel could only have been a very small one, exactly corresponding[2] to the old Romanesque east apsidal chapel which still forms one of the chevet or group of east apsidal chapels of the crypt.

The first *definite* mention of a Lady Chapel in the abbey appears early in the thirteenth century, about the year 1222, when the lord of the neighbouring manor of Sand-

[1] As the nineteenth century is closing, the custodians of Gloucester Cathedral, conscious of their great trust, among other works of careful conservative restoration, are not neglecting the exquisite Lady Chapel. The ruined windows, with their shattered mullions and decayed stone-work, through which wind and water alike had long found an entrance, have been carefully restored; the decayed masonry and broken parapets outside have been replaced; the accumulation of dust and dirt has been carefully removed from the roofs and walls; the faulty timbers of the roof have been removed; and the most conspicuous and costliest work of all, the coarse, unsightly glazing which took the place of the splendid glass of the Benedictine builders, is being taken away, and stained glass, the most exquisite and beautiful that the newly-awakened taste of modern art can furnish, is once more replacing those mighty walls of translucent colour, which were the chief glory of this once lovely chapel. The work is being carefully carried on by loving hands, under the advice of scholarly experts, among whom the Society of Antiquaries holds an honoured place.

[2] There is a singular, perhaps a unique, arrangement on the part of the old Romanesque builders of Gloucester Abbey, in the chapels built "out of" the east or choir end. There are in each case three storeys of these chapels, one over the other, exactly corresponding in size, and probably originally in internal arrangements. The *first* is in the crypt the *second* on the ground-floor, so to speak, of the abbey, and the *third* on the level of and leading out from the vast triforium of the choir. Most of these are still almost as the Romanesque builders left them, one over the other.

hurst (a village about three miles from the city of Gloucester), one Ralph de Wylington, and his wife Olympias, gave to God and the monks of the abbey of S. Peter the money for building a chapel in honour of the Mother of our Lord. There is some doubt whether this Lady Chapel of the De Wylingtons was an entirely new edifice, or whether it was not simply an adaptation and reornamentation of the central Norman chapel in the chevet of the choir apse, a little chapel which may have been already dedicated to the Blessed Virgin; the latter supposition being on the whole the more probable. Ralph and Olympias Wylington, in addition to building the chapel, settled a yearly sum on the monastery of S. Peter to provide lights to burn before the altar of S. Petronilla. (Petronilla, according to church tradition, was the virgin daughter of S. Peter. An immemorial tradition connects the abbey with this comparatively unknown early saint, who in far-back days possessed in or adjacent to the church a chapel dedicated to her.)

This "Wylington" chapel, from the year 1222, continued to be the Lady Chapel of the abbey until the year 1457–1499, when the present magnificent chapel we have been dwelling upon was designed and built. Although it represents the work of the last period of Perpendicular architecture, apologists for the monastic system point to it as a striking example of the vigour and power of the monk-artist at the moment of the great confiscation. Surely, they argue, when the arbitrary decree of King Henry VIII. swept monk and friar out of his English realm, the brain which could plan, and the hand which could carry out, the fair creation of the Lady Chapel of Gloucester, had surely not lost its cunning and its skill. At all events, in the department of architecture the

monk-artist has had no successor,[1] although three centuries and a half have elapsed since he passed away from among us.

The foregoing little sketch of the gradual rise of the gravest error in Catholic teaching, popularly, though scarcely accurately, termed Mariolatry, was required in our study of the story of an abbey or cathedral church and its principal divisions, to account for the presence of that remarkable feature so prominent in the great mediæval churches—the Lady Chapel.

In this famous "Mary" Chapel of Gloucester there is a peculiar feature which has hitherto escaped attention. The stranger standing on the grass lawn which forms so beautiful and striking a pavement for the cathedral of Gloucester, at the extreme east of the pile, notices that the east end of the great Lady Chapel is *square* (rectangular), and looking down the building perceives *two small transepts* in the Mary Chapel; then, as the eye travels down the vast pile of the church, it is again arrested by *two more transepts* of far greater magnitude.

[1] This may seem a somewhat sweeping assertion for one who has long dwelt hard by that narrow churchyard where Wren's masterpiece proudly dominates the greatest city of the world. But it must be remembered that Sir Christopher Wren stood absolutely alone. He raised up no school worth commemorating. He had neither predecessor nor successor. S. Paul's, magnificent though it be, can scarcely be termed an original building. For though in many of its very noble features it stands alone, it owes its inspiration unmistakably to the conceptions of Brunelleschi, Bramante, and Michael Angelo in the glorious piles of S. Mary of the Flowers at Florence and S. Peter's at Rome. Renaissance architecture besides, beautiful though it be, will never become the architecture of England. It belongs to another race, another clime. The "masters" of the craft of the last thirty or forty years of the nineteenth century number in their ranks, it is true, some really eminent men, but in their works they have scarcely ventured beyond some beautiful imitations of what the monk-artists of the great mediæval building age designed and carried out.

There is a special interest in these peculiar features. They have a story of their own.

The majority of English churches, it is well known, are not apsidal at the east end, but *square*, and it would appear that some very ancient tradition is at the root of that striking English feature. Now we have very good reason to believe that the majority of ancient British churches were so constructed. In Ireland a number of early little churches or oratories still exist. These undoubtedly date from early in the fifth century—*i.e.* from the days when Ireland was Christianised from Britain—they therefore undoubtedly represent the type of church architecture common in Britain *before* the coming and the subsequent devastation of Norse-folk invaders, the Saxon, the Engle, and the Jute. Without exception these very early little Irish churches or oratories are square-ended, not apsidal. They represent evidently an independent Christian tradition, something quite different from the basilican tradition of an apsidal or semicircular end. The conclusion then is forced upon us that Christianity came originally to this island from another source, from another centre than Rome or Italy.

This "square-ended" form for churches impressed upon our island by unknown missionaries is of an immemorial antiquity. The teaching has never been forgotten, but has through all the changing fortunes of the Church in our island remained *the* English favourite form. We will rapidly trace its story.

The first period of the existence of the Church in Britain may be dated roughly from some time in the second century (the exact date of the first preaching of

Christianity in Britain is unknown), until the coming of the Northmen in the middle of the fifth century. Ireland received the faith from Britain about A.D. 397, and judging from the invariable square east-end form of the early Irish churches, oratories, or sanctuaries, we may assume that the British churches, like their daughter Irish churches, were also, as a rule, square-ended. But it is also certain that there were exceptions. When Christianity after A.D. 313 became the recognised religion of the empire, in probably not a few centres, the churches of the Roman colonists and officials were built on the basilican mode of the capital of the world, with apsidal or semicircular sanctuaries.

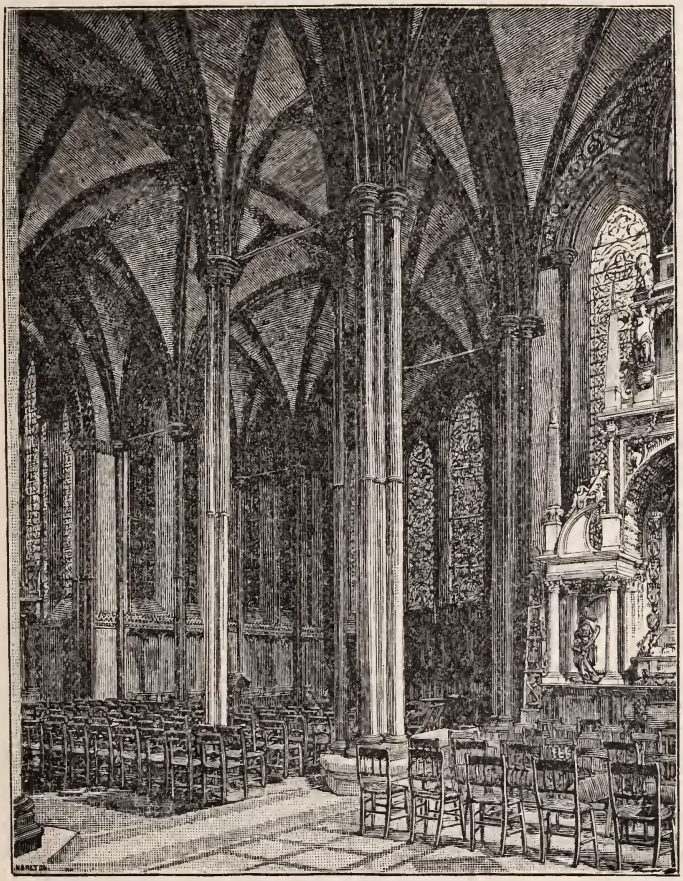
The Roman city of Silchester (near Reading), where the foundation of such a church, built in the fourth century for the Roman provincials, has recently been discovered, possesses an instance of this. The Silchester church had an apsidal or semicircular east end.

The second period of the Church in Britain may be dated, for our present argument, from the coming of Augustine from Italy, A.D. 597, and may be reckoned as enduring until the coming of the Normans in A.D. 1066. Augustine and his fellow-missionaries, as may have been expected, introduced the Italian or basilican type, but gradually we find the "square end," as the Saxon period wore on, again forcing its way into general use, the old traditional type of church somehow being deeply rooted in the hearts of the dwellers in our island.

The Norman Conquest once more, after A.D. 1066, gave an artificial and temporary victory to the Italian (basilican) or apsidal-ended churches, and Westminster Abbey, which was a purely Norman church, Gloucester, and certain other well-known Norman abbeys, were erected with

apsidal or semicircular east ends. Very singularly, however, nothing could uproot the old, old taste for the primitive British type of church, and when once the conquerors and the conquered began to be welded into one people, the square east end gradually superseded its Roman apsidal rival. By the thirteenth century the victory of the square-ended type was pretty well complete; and it became *the* special English form. The well-known case of Westminster Abbey, with its apse and striking chevet of chapels at the east end, which might have been justly cited as a contrary instance, is exceptional, the great abbey owing its Roman and continental form to the special circumstances under which it was restored and rebuilt. The foreign influences to which King Henry III., who mainly carried out the work, was subjected are well known, and enormously coloured the political history of that long and somewhat disastrous reign. Durham, on the other hand, where purely English influences were at work, under the rule of Bishop Poore, saw its Norman apse destroyed A.D. 1235–1241, and the beautiful work known as the Chapel of the Nine Altars commenced. This Chapel of the Nine Altars, at the east end of Durham, is not unjustly cited as perhaps the noblest instance existing of a square-ended termination of a great English abbey. A somewhat similar transformation was effected in the famous priory church of Lindisfarne with its undying memories, hard by Durham.

Among the great churches of England, either through original construction, through partial transformation, or subsequent addition, the following will be found to have the square or rectangular east end, that peculiar form derived from the ancient British form adopted in the island *before* the coming of the Norsemen in the fifth



Lady Chapel, Salisbury Cathedral.

century: York, Exeter, Worcester, Salisbury, Christ Church (Oxford), Winchester, Hereford, Rochester, Lincoln, Ely, Chichester, Peterborough, Chester, Carlisle, Bangor, &c.

Comparatively few traces of this peculiarly English (British) form, with its striking and interesting traditions handed down from an immemorial antiquity, and bearing a testimony to some original centre of Christianity other than Rome and Italy, are found in the great continental churches.

In the vast and populous province of the empire known as Gaul, and including modern France, the Low Countries, &c., among its numerous and splendid cathedrals and abbatial churches, only one can be cited with a square-ended east end—the cathedral of Laon. To Laon may be added the important church of Dol. "Square-ended" churches, comparatively small, however, and unimportant, are, however, not unfrequent in the villages and in the little country towns, especially in the northern districts of France and in the Burgundian country. These often date from the thirteenth century.

But the magnificent and stately cathedrals and abbeys on the continent of Europe, different from their sister cathedrals in England, are, however, as a rule, characterised by the feature of a great apse, semicircular or polygonal, with its beautiful chevet of chapels. As instances we would put, among many well-known examples, Nôtre Dame of Paris, the cathedrals of Reims, Chartres, Amiens, Bourges, Beauvais, Séez, Narbonne, Toulouse, Alby, Auxerre, the important churches of Saint Sernin (Toulouse), Saint Ouen (Rouen), &c.

The great Benedictine abbey of S. Peter, Gloucester,

since the days of Henry VIII. known as Gloucester Cathedral, all through the Middle Ages, that is from the days of the Conqueror, at the end of the eleventh century, until the second half of the fifteenth century, roughly a period of a little more than 350 years, in all its changes and developments preserved its eastern apse, almost semicircular, originally designed by the Norman builders of the second half of the eleventh century, with its chevet of chapels (three distinct blocks, containing nine distinct chapels). Gloucester Abbey thus was one of the few notable exceptions, in this striking particular, to the general English type of square-ended churches. In the year 1457, when Abbot Hanley was ruling, the monks of the famous Benedictine house, in accordance with the comparatively novel doctrinal development of Mariolatry, determined to build a new and magnificent Lady Chapel as an "annexe" to their stately abbey—a chapel which should rank among the first, if not *the* first, of the Mary Chapels of the land.

To carry out this design, the monk-architect completely changed the appearance of the east end of the great church. With rare skill he did away with the apsidal termination without materially disturbing the vast east window, which still preserves its curved form, and with its mighty wall of glass strangely soars over the roof of the Lady Chapel.

But in his beautiful design, while honouring "Our Lady" with the new and exquisite shrine, which deservedly holds a very high place among the charming conceptions of the last period of Gothic architecture, the Benedictine artist determined to give his loved, historic abbey that singular and peculiar English feature which it had hitherto lacked, viz., a square, rectangular termina-

tion. Hence it came about that, in its last architectural transformation, Gloucester, too, became *square-ended*, thus preserving in the mighty abbey of the Severn Lands the immemorial tradition handed down from the third century, the tradition of the square end, brought originally to this island by early Christian teachers from the East, *not* from Italy and Rome.

Nor was this master-architect who designed the Lady Chapel of Gloucester content with only impressing *this* immemorial British type of church architecture upon his abbey. Hitherto S. Peter's Abbey had possessed but *one* transept; now the secondary or eastern transept was another feature peculiarly English. It is found in the great piles of Lincoln, Salisbury, Canterbury, Beverley, and York, but not in the mighty homes of prayer of France. One solitary instance[1] occurred in the vast abbey of Cluny (Burgundy), now, alas, razed to the ground, which contained *two* eastern transepts.

The architect of the new chapel of "Our Lady" at Gloucester determined that his abbey should henceforth boast, too, of *this* peculiar English feature, and wove into his beautiful design those two singular and beautiful projections, usually pointed out as chauntry chapels, surmounted by minstrel galleries, but which are really two small transepts. A glance at the ground plan of Gloucester Cathedral, as it now stands, will show the accuracy

[1] This peculiar feature of the double transept we have before noticed in the chapter dealing with the "Transept." In the east of France originally the cathedral of Besançon, at Verdun, possessed two transepts, one at the east, the other at the west of the building, thus, however, differing from the English use of two transepts, both at the east end. This double transept, one at *each* end of the pile, is also found in some of the great German cathedrals in the Rhineland, notably at Strasburg, Mayence, and Spires.

of this apparently novel, and perhaps to some, startling deduction. So Gloucester, in its last and final transformation, in the fifteenth century, became possessed of both the special English architectural features—the square-end and the double eastern transept.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE TOWER—SPIRE—BELFRY—BELLS—ORGAN

The tower, the spire, the belfry, so magnificent and conspicuous a feature in the mediæval cathedral or abbey, as well as in the innumerable churches dotted over Western Christendom, is, comparatively speaking, a late development in the Christian Church. During the first three centuries of our era, naturally the buildings and the places of meeting of the persecuted, or at best scornfully tolerated, believers in the Crucified, possessed no tower, or steeple, or any distinguishing mark of their presence in the city or the village. They shunned rather than courted observation. For this reason even the comparatively small bells in use in Pagan Rome were, of course, never heard in a Christian meeting-house.

After the peace of the Church was established early in the fourth century, the basilican model was largely adopted among the Christians as the type for their churches, but the basilica possessed no tower. Thus it happened that this adjunct to the sacred building with which we are so familiar, as far as we know, seems rarely to have been thought of for several centuries after the Edict of Constantine, A.D. 313. One of the earliest mentions of a tower that we come across occurs in the year A.D. 770, when we read of Pope Stephen III. erecting a tower as an adjunct to S. Peter's (Rome), in which he hung three bells to call the faithful to divine

service. If the prominent Roman basilica of S. Peter's up to this time possessed no tower, we may reasonably conclude that such an addition to a Christian church was at that period uncommon. Nor, indeed, for a long time after this date was a tower an ordinary feature in a church. In the accounts we possess of the abbeys of the ninth and, indeed, of the tenth centuries, we find rare mention of such an addition, although we have circumstantial details of the various parts of not a few of the sacred edifices of that age.[1]

It was at this period of the great revival at the beginning of the eleventh century, when the Western world put on the "white robe of churches," that the bell tower began to appear as a usual[2] addition to the abbey. At first there appears to have been doubt and hesitation on the question how best to connect this comparatively novel feature with the rest of the edifice. In earlier instances it was often built separate from the church —now near the western entrance, now near one of the transepts. This separate tower, distinct from the main building, has ever continued to be a favourite use in Italy.

These ancient towers seem to have been usually round,

[1] See, too, for further details on early towers, Appendix A at end of volume.

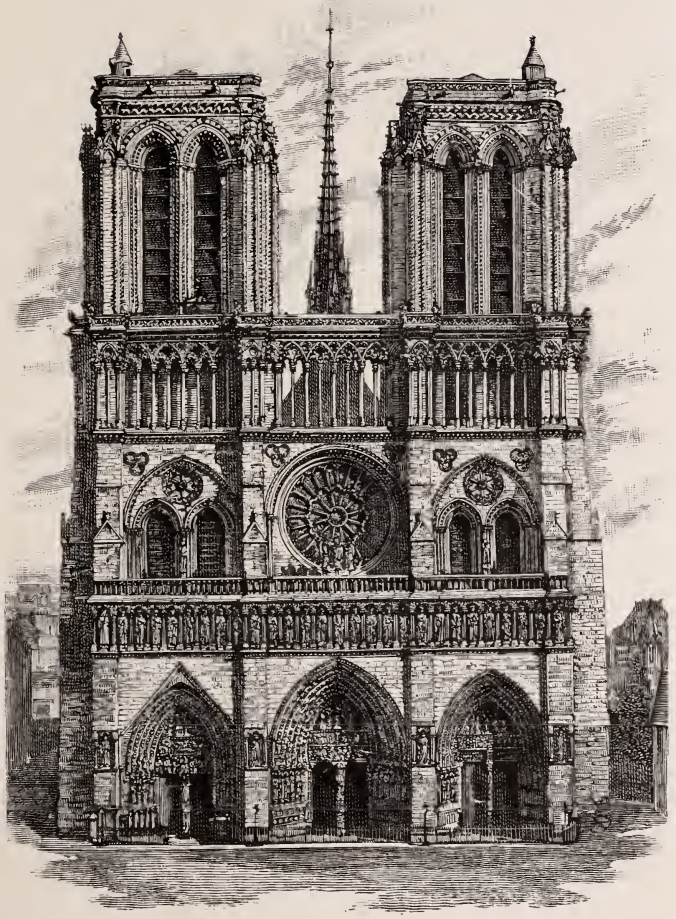
[2] Viollet le Duc (*s.v.* "Clocher") considers that among the earliest church towers certainly in the north of Europe, must be reckoned fortified towers built in the north and centre of France, at the west end of churches during the tenth century, as a defence against the perpetually recurring invasions and raids of the Northmen. If bells were hung in them, it was not their principal use. None of these fortified towers, however, remain intact. The Irish round towers were probably built for the same purpose of defence. A reference to such a use in time of war occurs in the "Roman de Rou," as late as A.D. 1105, when Robert Fitz-Hamon was besieged in the tower at Bayeux by the troops of the Duke of Normandy.

but very soon the circular form was exchanged for the square shape to which we are accustomed. Gradually they assumed greater importance, and the bells hung in them became larger and were more used. The twelfth century witnessed a great development in these particulars, and especially wherever Norman influence prevailed, we find the tower an important feature often raised in the centre of the building, where the transept crossed the nave. The tower, or towers, now at the west end, now at the centre, became in this century a common and conspicuous feature certainly in all the more important churches.

In the following century (the thirteenth) towers erected were often of portentous dimensions. They became, in many instances, the most conspicuous exterior feature of the great church. In the original designs of some of the grander cathedrals as many as five or even seven towers were arranged for, but it seems that rarely, if ever, were these grandiose designs fully carried out. As the Middle Ages advanced, they became more and more fantastic, and frequently higher. The cathedrals of Strasburg and Antwerp are good instances of these enormous and daring conceptions.

Such is a brief outline of the genesis and progress of this new and striking addition to the architecture of churches.

We will, however, add a few details to this brief sketch. It must be remembered the tower was not built primarily for bells. The bell for a long period was small and of no great importance. It was late in the fourteenth century that the bell became of any great size, and it was not until the fifteenth century that we can definitely say that large and important peals were cast. At first, and

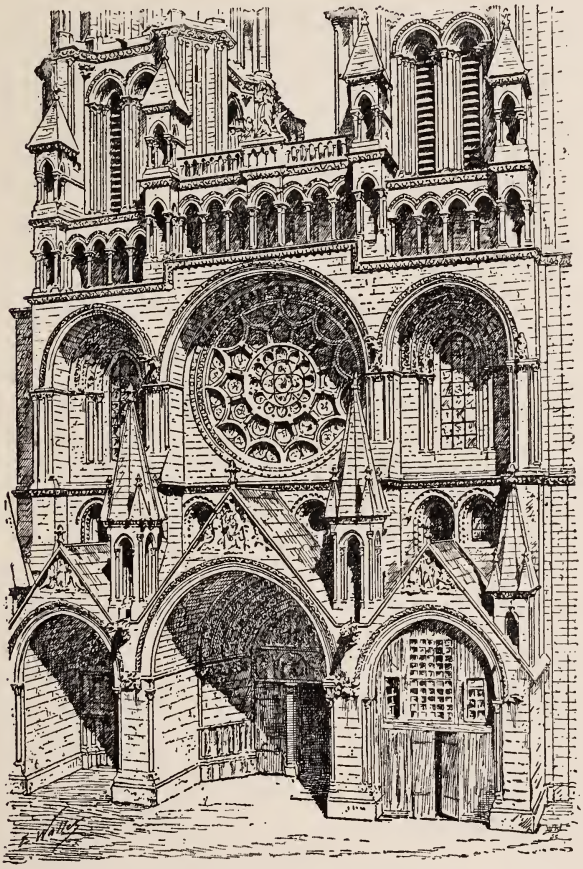


Nôtre Dame, Paris (West Front).

largely in certain districts peculiarly harassed by northern raiders, we find towers belonging to churches, and these often separate from the main building. Late in the eleventh century this necessity for a place of defence existed no longer, and the tower was introduced as a regular part of the building of an abbey or cathedral, partly as a conspicuous ornament, partly possibly as a sign of the power of the abbot or bishop. As the donjon or central pile of a castle was the outward sign of the strength of a castle and its lord, so the tower of a church became the sign or symbol of the strength and power of the abbatial church or cathedral, and of its lord the abbot or bishop. The tower of the church of the twelfth century has been happily termed "a religious donjon." That bells were hung in these towers of an abbey is true, but as the bells were, comparatively speaking, small, the size of the twelfth and even thirteenth century church towers was out of all proportion to the size of the bell or bells hung in them. Such towers could not with any propriety be termed bell-towers or belfries, and although symbolical of authority and power, and highly ornamental, conferring unmistakably great dignity and importance, and often rare beauty upon the building to which they were attached, they were not in any way *necessary* adjuncts even to a great church.

S. Bernard of Clairvaux, the founder of the Cistercian Order (A.D. 1119), whose vast and widespread communities claimed to be Benedictines, but reformed Benedictines, in his austere rule renounced for the houses of his new order all the stateliness and magnificence which was characterising the monastery of Cluny and its countless daughter monasteries. He sternly forbade in the

architecture of a Cistercian house everything that was not absolutely necessary and useful. All art received a



Main Façade of Laon Cathedral.

severe check through the spirit which breathed through

the regulations which proceeded from the saintly and austere abbot of Citeaux.

Sculpture, for instance, was forbidden in that stern, grave rule. We have seen already how painted glass, also, was among the things not allowed in a Cistercian house. Rigorously, too, did Bernard of Clairvaux refuse to allow a tower to be built in the monastic churches of his order. He regarded it as practically useless, as a sign of spiritual pride, as a mere luxury in a Cistercian abbey church.

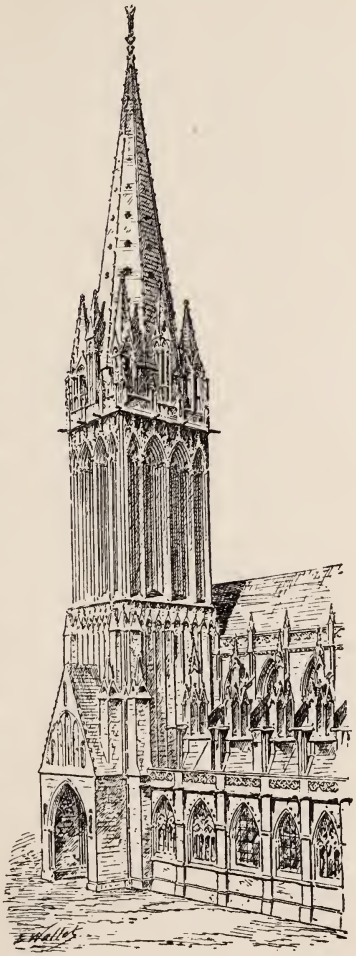
But save in the earlier abbeys of the Cistercians, the veto of Bernard had little effect, and the twelfth and following centuries witnessed the erection of innumerable church towers. In the case of the greater monasteries and richer cathedrals this addition was often of incomparable splendour and richness. As has been said, foremost in this special development in church building, the Normans in their ancestral duchy, and in all the countries subject to their influence, were pre-eminent. England, after the Conquest, was conspicuous in such works, and the beautiful fancies of Gothic architecture which speedily superseded the sterner and plainer Romanesque, found an almost limitless field in the decorations and adornments of the soaring tower or steeple.

The gradual introduction of great bells lent a practical value to these splendid additions to churches, and as the Middle Ages advanced, the tower more or less was constructed as the fitting receptacle for these bells, which became, as time went on, a necessary and popular adjunct to every house of prayer, from the humble village church with its solitary bell, to the lordly Benedictine abbey, or the vast and stately cathedral of a city with its peal composed of many bells, some of them of great size.

The Tower or Spire

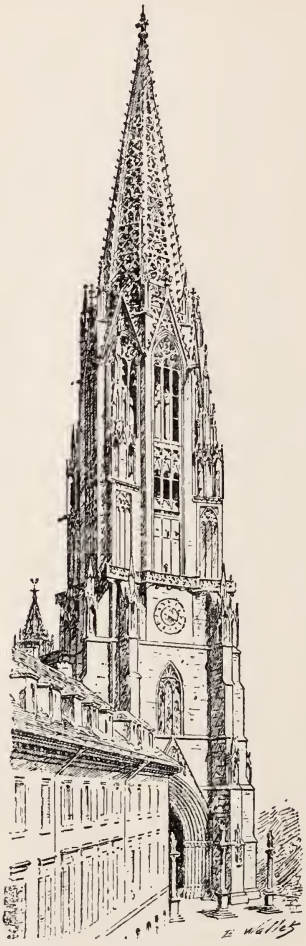
The result of this new and common development of the tower in church architecture has been to provide in the large majority of mediæval churches. abbeys, and cathedrals their most striking external feature, in the tower, infinitely varied in the different countries, and even in the different provinces or districts of the same country, under the influence of diversified schools of architecture belonging to the great Gothic family.

Well known and widely admired are the grand towers, steeples, and belfries, which still cast in innumerable instances their broad shadows over the great mediæval houses of prayer still with us, the pride and glory of so many of the great cities of Europe, as, for instance, the west towers of Nôtre Dame of Paris, of Reims, of Abbeville, and S. Gudule at Brussels, the steeple-crowned



Tower of the Church of S. Pierre at Caen.

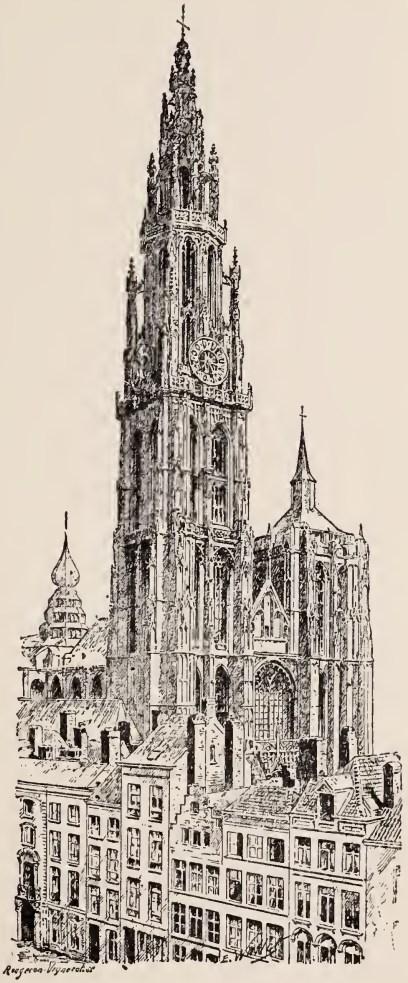
towers of Chartres, to take a few known examples. The exquisite open work of Freiburg, the dizzy height of Strasburg and Antwerp, tell of different schools. In England many and various, of strange and even awful beauty, are the towers of the churches and cathedrals of the Middle Ages. On the hill of Lincoln, on the midland plain of York, beneath the green rolling downs of Canterbury, in the green Severn Lands, on the cliff of Durham, at Salisbury in the south, in Norwich and Boston on the east of our storied island, are matchless examples of mediæval towers and steeples. But beautiful and striking as are these, as are countless other examples which might be cited, the tower conception of the mediæval architect, as we now gaze on it, is very different from that dreamed of and planned out in the first instance by the abbey masters of the works in the great building age of Christendom.



Tower of the Cathedral of Freiburg-in-Breisgau.

In some cases the steeple

on the upper storey which crowned the mighty tower has disappeared, through accident or the careless neglect of its guardians. But, as a general rule, the original grandiose conception was seldom carried out. Money was in the end wanting, for the erection of these stupendous piles called for vast outlay. The zeal which burned when the work was planned grew cold before the work was carried out. Not unfrequently, when the great central tower was commenced, the substructures were suspected to be too slight for the enormous weight designed to be placed upon them, and through timidity, or possibly wise caution, the original design was never proceeded with. For some such reason, probably, the twin



Tower of Antwerp Cathedral.

towers of Nôtre Dame, the spires of Chartres, adorn with their singular beauty the *western* ends of these magnificent minsters. But the place is empty where the great central tower was originally designed to complete the great conception of these lordly buildings. At home Westminster Abbey seems ever to be waiting the advent of a great architect daring enough to raise its mighty central tower over the vacant lantern space. Again, to take a familiar example, the solitary and superb tower of Antwerp still waits its "twin" planned by its great though long-forgotten architect. Viollet le Duc, in one of his charming drawings, half reality half fancy, gives us a bird's-eye view of the mighty pile of Reims, with its splendid cluster of soaring, traceried spires with which the great master who designed this queen among cathedrals, hoped to crown his great and almost perfect conception. But Reims, alas, will never now boast this glory.

The tower of Gloucester, one of the wonders of the English school of Perpendicular architects, was commenced and in great part completed A.D. 1450–7. It was the second. some think the third, central tower of the abbey. Originally a Norman tower, no doubt much like that of Tewkesbury Abbey, was erected by Serlo, the first Norman abbot, late in the eleventh century. It was apparently a plain, massive, Romanesque structure of no great height, and was probably injured by one of the repeated fires which ravaged the abbey, and seems[1] to

[1] The "Historia" of the monastery "seems" to record this rebuilding of the central tower in A.D. 1222. But there is no trace whatever now apparent of this work, "not even," as Professor Freeman reminds us, "a range of stones." The old Norman work belonging to the first tower goes up to a certain height, then the Perpendicular work of the present gigantic tower comes at once upon it. There is no intermediate stage.

GLOUCESTER.

have been partially rebuilt or restored in the first quarter of the thirteenth century. The present magnificent tower was erected in the middle of the fifteenth century by Abbot Seabroke, partly, no doubt, to accommodate the new bells, partly from a wish to adorn the great abbey with a tower which was to be the noblest in the West country. Seabroke's work was eminently successful, and his master of the works produced one of the stateliest and most effective towers in Western Christendom.

It is one of the three famous square towers of England, the other two being at Canterbury and Lincoln. It is not its great height which makes it conspicuous among the towers of Western Christendom, it being only 225 feet from its base to the top of its pinnacles, but it is its magnificent and well-proportioned outline, its apparent massiveness, that attracts attention, the leads, nearly flat, just below the graceful pinnacles, measuring 41 feet 1 inch by 40 feet 4 inches. It is a very marvel of strength crowned with beauty, and, with the exception of the great towers above alluded to, at Canterbury and Lincoln, it stands absolutely unrivalled among the square towers of the churches of the West. In the portion which rises above the lofty choir roof, it is entirely taken up with two vast and lofty bell-chambers, the lower storey being the home of "Great Peter," a bell which weighs nearly three tons, the upper containing a noble peal of eight smaller though considerable bells. Its exceeding beauty and charm has been lately well painted by a writer[1] on Gloucester. "It is the grandest and most impressive feature of the outside of the cathedral. No matter from whence one looks at it, the charm is

[1] "The Cathedral Church of Gloucester," by H. S. L. S. Massey, M.A., 1898, in Bell's Cathedral Series.

there. Seen from the gardens in the side streets close by, when the pear-trees are in bloom, or in the full blaze of a hot summer's day, or again, later in the autumn, when the leaves are beginning to turn, or, better still, in snow-time, it is always full of beauty.

"On a bright hot day the pinnacles seem so far off in the haze, as to suggest a dream of fairy-land. On a wet day, after a shower, the tower has the appearance of being so close at hand that it almost seems to speak. Viewed by moonlight, the tower has an unearthly look which cannot well be described."

Beautiful though it be, a very glory among towers, it would not come under the austere criticism of S. Bernard of Clairvaux, the Cistercian founder, as a mere thing of loveliness, an object of simple luxury, a monument of haughty ecclesiastical pride, for it was really built as a home for the famous Gloucester bells. It is emphatically a bell-tower, whence by day and night the music of one of the most pathetic peals in England goes forth in sweet waves of the softest music over the waking and sleeping city, a perpetual reminder of the mighty abbey whence now for eight hundred eventful years the incense of prayer and praise perpetually has gone up from our sad earth to the Throne of God in Heaven.

THE BELLS

A little account of "bells" seems a necessary adjunct to our story of the tower, their home. The bell was not unknown to the Greek and Roman, but it seems in those far-back times to have been, comparatively speaking, but of small dimensions. Durandus of Mende, in his "Rationale," tells us how the "bell" was first invented

at Nola, a city of Campania, whence came the terms Campanæ" for the larger bells, and "Nolæ" for the smaller. Various writers have adopted this curious derivation, among others, S. Anselm; but Durandus' quaint suggestion must be classed as fanciful.

During the first three centuries, naturally the bells would be unused in Christian churches, quiet and privacy of worship being, in the ages of persecution, or at most of toleration, an indispensable condition for all the earlier religious assemblies, large and small, of the believers in the Crucified.

It is doubtful when they were first formally used in the Church, certainly, however, before the seventh century. There is a tradition that Pope Sabinianus, A.D. 604, directed that a bell should be rung to give notice of the hours of the "offices." They are mentioned too in the Rules of S. Benedict. Bede alludes to them in England in the eighth century. It was not, however, until the period of the great revival of religion in the eleventh century, that the bell began to assume the position of importance in the equipment of a church which we find it occupying in the Middle Ages. The size of the bell gradually increased, and the care bestowed upon its manufacture became greater as the twelfth century advanced. In the eleventh century we read, for instance, of a bell then remarkable for its size being presented by King Robert of France to the church of S. Agnan at Orléans, and this bell, probably one of the largest known, weighed as much as 2600 pounds. As the Middle Ages advanced, the passion for bells in churches rapidly grew. There were few parish churches but possessed one, or two, or even more, while the abbeys and cathedrals continued to erect more towers to hang bells of various sizes and power. In the

thirteenth century we find bells of very considerable size and importance. Durandus of Mende at the close of this century (the thirteenth) devotes a section to the consideration of their symbolism. It was not, however, until the fifteenth century that the bell attained to the vast dimensions we are accustomed to associate with the more important of these popular and well-loved instruments of music. Gloucester Cathedral is singularly fortunate in the possession of some very ancient bells of rare sweetness and power, one of these being of great size and importance. Its retention of these precious mediæval relics came about in this wise:—

In the middle of the fourteenth century, when Edward III. was king, there was a bell-foundry in Gloucester which had a widely-extended reputation. The head of the foundry was even employed by distant Ely to cast four bells for the famous house of S. Etheldreda.

The pre-Reformation bells of the abbey of S. Peter's, Gloucester, were without doubt the work of this foundry, which was most probably carried on by dependants of the abbey, or at least under its protection.

At the epoch of the dissolution, in the bell-chambers of the central tower were hanging "one grete bell whereuppon the cloke strykithe, and eight other grete bells whereuppon the chyme goithe."[1] In the general plundering of the suppression, it was very seldom that the bells of the suppressed house escaped the spoiler, the metal of which they were composed being a valuable bit of plunder. Probably the citizens of Gloucester interceded for the bells and chimes they loved, and they were

[1] From an indenture made between Bishop Hooper, the Dean of Gloucester, the Mayor, and the Royal Commissioners, bearing date 27th May 1553.

suffered to remain in their place untouched. Some years later, the question of the fate of the Gloucester bells seems to have been further considered, and we read how they were formally permitted to remain until the king's pleasure in the matter should be further known. Within three months after this official respite Edward VI. was dead. The danger hour for the Gloucester bells was thus finally tided over, and the nine "grete bells," or their survivors, hang still in their old home. Of the nine, five of the original bells occupy their old places in the Tower, and one of the five is the famous Great Peter which, hung on a very fine oak framing, is the solitary occupant of the lower chamber of the massive tower. Great Peter weighs nearly three tons.

Various ornaments, usually of a sacred character, were engraved on the mediæval bells—the Crucifixion of our Saviour; the dead Christ in the arms of the Blessed Virgin; figures of the Virgin herself, are favourite subjects. Sometimes the seal of the cathedral chapter or the arms of the abbey are engraved. More interesting, however, are the inscriptions which not unfrequently run round the bell. A beautiful bell belonging to the abbey church of Moissac, bearing the very early date of 1273, only broken up and re-founded about half a century ago, bore the inscription "*Salve Regina Misericordiæ.*" The second of the Gloucester bells is inscribed with "*Sancte Petre, ora pro nobis,*" with the ornament of the fleur-de-lis. The date of this bell is 1350. The fifth bell bears the words, "*In multis annis resonet campana Johannis.*" On the sixth, the curious words, "*Sum Rosa pulsata Mundi Maria vocata*" appear. Great Peter is inscribed with the legend, "*Me fecit fieri Conventus nomine Petri.*" The arms of the Benedictine

monastery are also engraved on this great mediæval bell, whose deep, sweet music has now bidden the citizens of Gloucester to prayers for several hundred years.

The chimes of the cathedral are now heard at 1 A.M., 5 A.M., 8 A.M., 1 P.M., 5 P.M., and 8 P.M. The four tunes played are the successors of the pre-Reformation carillon.

Durandus of Mende in his "Rationale" has several pages devoted to the symbolism of bells. He considers them as symbols of preachers who, after the manner of bells, are appointed to remind the faithful of the "Faith." The clapper represents the preacher's tongue; the wooden beam to which the bell is hung typifies the Cross of our Lord. Much of his symbolism here, as usual, is curious and interesting, though, as usual, not a little fanciful.

THE ORGAN

The bells as we now possess them were a mediæval invention; the musical apparatus of a great church has however received a yet later addition in the organ of vast dimensions, which now occupies so conspicuous a position, not only in the case of cathedrals, but in the services of all the churches of Western Christendom; such an organ was unknown in the Middle Ages. There were doubtless organs at an early date in many important churches, including, of course, the cathedrals and abbeys, but, compared to the enormous and powerful instruments now so common, these were small and inconspicuous.

In the picture of a great mediæval church of the fifteenth century, presented to us in the "Rites of Durham," only a few lines are devoted to the organ or organs of Durham. The reference is as follows: "There

was three paire[1] of organs belonging to the said Quire, for maintenance of God's service and the better celebratinge thereof. One of the fairest paire of the three did stand over the Quire dore, only opened and played uppon at principall Feasts, the pipes being all of most fine wood and workmanshipp, very faire, partly gilded uppon the inside, and the outside of the leaves and covers up to the topp, with branches and flowers finely gilted, with the name of Jesus gilted with gold. . . . The second paire stood on the north side of the Quire, being never played uppon but when the four Doctors of the Church was read, viz., Augustine, Ambrose, Gregorye, and Jerome, being a faire paire of large organs, called the cryers. The third paire was daily used at ordinary service."

Organs first appeared in France under Pepin, A.D. 759, one being sent him by the Emperor of the East from Constantinople. Shortly afterwards the Bishop of Augsburg had one built for his cathedral.[2] But these early instruments were evidently very small. We have, however, one account of a very large organ, built under the direction of Elphege, Abbot of Winchester, which required seventy men to manage it! But as the record of this vast organ stands alone in mediæval annals, we cannot help questioning the accuracy of the statement. A large organ is mentioned as having existed in Westminster Abbey[3] at a very early date. Although it is clear that organs of a small size were not uncommon in the fourteenth century, the two most ancient of existing organs in France only

[1] The expression was a well-known one at the time described in the "Rites of Durham."

[2] *Montalembert*, "Monks of the West," Book xviii. chapter v.

[3] *Parker*, "Glossary," *s.v.* "Organ."

date from the last years of the fifteenth and earlier years of the sixteenth century, one being at Soliés-Ville (Var), and the other in the cathedral of Perpignan. In the sixteenth century they increased in size and in importance, but it was only in the seventeenth century that they assumed anything like the dimensions of the instrument to which we are accustomed.

No doubt the increase in the dimensions of the organ and its general adoption was due to the great development in music as a science, especially in church music, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The organ of Gloucester Cathedral, now in use, is a notable and splendid example of a great organ of the seventeenth century, possessing most of the additions suggested by modern science. It is justly famous as one of the most beautiful instruments in England. Originally constructed between A.D. 1663-1669, by the renowned organ-builders of the Restoration, Thomas and Renatus Harris, it was completed in the present century, in successive stages, by Messrs Willis, in 1847–87–99. The organ of Thomas and Renatus Harris replaced a still earlier Jacobin organ, which was in use in the cathedral before the Civil Wars. The beautiful case of the small choir organ is a relique of the earlier arrangement. The case and pipes (buffet d'orgues) of this great organ, especially when viewed from the west or nave, is an unattractive object, but is historically interesting from the heraldic shields [1] emblazoned on the pipes, the coats-

[1] These, unfortunately, are scarcely visible either from the choir or the nave, the bright colour and gilding being dimmed, nearly two hundred and fifty years having elapsed since the work was done, the present effect being little more than a blurred mass of greys and

of-arms including the Stuart sovereigns from James I. Prominent among these heraldic adornments are the coats-of-arms of the Duke of York, afterwards James II.; of his first duchess, Anne Hyde, and of her father, the great Earl of Clarendon—the Duchess Anne being the principal donor to the new Restoration organ. She was probably specially interested in Gloucester through the influence of one of the prebendaries (Dr. Blandford), her chaplain.

browns. Although there are certain notable organ cases (buffets d'orgues) in England, it is in Holland where the organ case is shown in the full magnificence which properly belongs to this great instrument—one of the most striking developments in religious worship of the last three hundred years. Haarlem is conspicuous in its possession of a superb organ case, but Bois-le-Duc (Herzogenbuchsee) boasts the grandest organ case in the world.

CHAPTER XXV

THE CLOISTER

In a monastery, after the abbey church itself, the most important and interesting portion of the surrounding buildings belonging to the religious community is undoubtedly *the cloister*. In many cathedrals, too, of the great mediæval building age, the cloister attached to the house of God possesses also, though in a less degree than in the case of a monastic establishment, a peculiar and special significance.

Now the genesis of the cloister is interesting. In the fourth and fifth centuries, after the establishment of the peace of the Church under the Emperor Constantine, in the more important churches erected after the basilican model, as a rule a court or open space was arranged in front of the principal entrance, which was, at first indifferently placed, as convenience dictated, at the eastern or western extremity of the building.

This open court, which corresponded to the classic atrium, was usually surrounded with a portico or covered walk or gallery, termed triporticus or quadriporticus, according as the portico or covered walk consisted of three or four sides. In some instances extraordinary pains were taken to decorate and adorn the portico surrounding the outer court. The court in question, or atrium, at first was put to various uses. In it were gathered frequently the catechumens, or those who were

Originally the abbot's, then the prior's lodgings. The buildings were erected in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries.

not yet formally received into the congregation of the faithful who worshipped within the sacred building. There also were wont to assemble penitents or sinners who for a time had been excluded from the society of the faithful believers. It was also used occasionally in very early times as a place of interment for the more distinguished Christian worshippers in the neighbouring basilica—hence came the name by which this outer court was sometimes known, "Paradisus," whence came the mediæval term of "Parvis," which was often in later times attached to the square or "place" immediately lying under the shadow of the chief entrance to the holy building, as, for instance, in Paris, "the Parvis Nôtre Dame."

In the middle of the "court" or atrium, generally was a well or cistern. There the worshippers, before entering the church, performed certain ablutions. The holy-water stoup always found in Roman Catholic churches is a "memory" of this "atrium" well. In the cloister-garth, with rare exceptions, such a well will be always found, another "memory," no doubt, of the atrium well. There is such a well in the garden of the Gloucester cloister.

But as time went on, the original purposes for which this "atrium" or outer court—the portico—in front of the entrance, was intended, existed no longer. The conditions of the Christian society became largely modified, the catechumen class disappeared, church discipline became relaxed, the number of penitents excluded from the Church grew very small, and only sinners who were specially notorious for their great crimes were ever shut out from public worship. The portico, too, was gradually disused altogether as a place for interment. On the other hand new arrangements became imperatively necessary for the monastic life, and in a lesser degree for the accommodation of canons and

other persons connected with the service of cathedrals and important churches.

To meet those new requirements the outer court, the atrium, or the portico, was removed from the original position which it occupied to a quieter and more secluded place at the side of the abbey and the cathedral, and under the well-known name of cloister, "the claustrum," or enclosed secluded space, the old portico, the triporticus or quadriporticus (the three-sided or four-sided portico) reappeared, and assumed an important, even an indispensable, place among the mediæval abbatial or cathedral buildings.

The "Cathedral" cloister will need, comparatively speaking, but little descriptive detail. It was in fact little more than a cluster or block of dwellings built round a reserved and enclosed spot immediately under the shadow of the great house of prayer, designed for the habitation of the canons and minor officials engaged in the service of the church. These were often very numerous, and were not by any means always in residence. The more modern term, "close," is immediately connected with, and is derived directly from this usage. In very early times an important school, where various kinds of learning found a home, frequently existed in close connection with the cathedral, and was allotted a dwelling-place in this cluster of dwellings which arose beneath the shadow of the church. We might instance in England, York in the seventh and eighth centuries, Canterbury in the days of Theodore and Hadrian in the seventh century, Winchester in the days of Ethelwold in the later years of the tenth century.

But it was in the monasteries, which after the great revival inaugurated by Cluny became so conspicuous a feature in the religious and educational life of the West,

that the cloister of the Middle Ages obtained its supreme importance. The cloister was the heart of the community. It served many purposes. It was the place in which the "religious" spent many hours of their quiet life in meditation, in literary work, in teaching. There the novices were often instructed. There the copyists of manuscripts plied their various crafts, some simply copying in their beautiful and careful handwriting, thus providing the Western world with its scanty supply of literature, and, until the printing-press was invented, preserving accurate copies of what the world already possessed of books; some busied in illuminating the manuscripts, some in binding, some in copying music for the many mediæval services. A few were occupied in original research and in composing and arranging monastic and historical records. One portion of the cloister was usually set apart specially for the instruction of the novices and of other youths entrusted to the care of the monks.

In the cloister were doors leading to the great chambers connected with the every-day life of a monastic community, such as the *refectory*, where the monks dined; the *dormitory*, where they slept during those few hours allotted to rest; the *chapter-house*, where they met daily and consulted together on the business, public and private, of their house. Other doors in the cloister led to the *infirmary*, where the sick and aged monks received the tenderest care and attention; to the *abbot's* or *prior's special lodgings;* to the *parlour*, where they received friends and strangers; to *smaller cloisters* or slypes leading to the outer courts and separate buildings, such as the guest-chambers, kitchens, and store-rooms of the religious house; to the *cemetery*; to the *large garden*, &c. Two great doors usually opened from the cloister into the abbey church.

In the centre of the cloister invariably lay a garden usually turfed, sometimes bright with flowers, and often shaded with trees, containing the well above referred to. The windows of the cloister walls were in many cases, especially in the later Middle Ages, wholly or in part glazed, frequently with rich stained glass.

We shall return presently to the every-day life of a monk, so much of which was spent in these cloisters and in the apartments immediately leading out of them.

This portico or four-sided gallery we are describing was built sometimes on the south, at other times on the north side of the church. One general plan, with occasional modifications seems, however, generally to have been adopted in the more important monasteries, built after the great church revival of the eleventh century. Various reasons determined the choice of situation; the proximity of water no doubt being ever a most important consideration. The position of the city, in cases where the monastic house was built in the immediate vicinity, or even in the enceinte of the city boundaries, of course largely entered into the choice of the north or south sides of the abbey church for the site of the conventual buildings, as a very considerable space was necessary. It has been suggested that as in northern countries the south of the church was the preferable situation, this more favoured position in the case of cathedrals was often selected by the bishop for his dwelling, garden, offices, &c., leaving the colder and more shaded side for the "close" containing the dwellings for the canons and other officials.

In Gloucester, and in other simply monastic foundations, where the cloister and all the conventual buildings lie to the north, some have supposed that the choice was

The Garden of the Cloister.

made by Italian monks,[1] who, forgetting the climate of the north, curiously imagined that the side shaded from the sun was preferable. The more probable reason, however, for the selection of the north side of the abbey for the conventual buildings of Gloucester was that the south side was already occupied by the city houses.

Frequently, in certain of the more wealthy monastic foundations and also in the case of some cathedrals, the cloister was richly adorned with sculpture and even ornamented with colour. Sometimes costly marbles were used for the pillars and their capitals. No portion of the sacred building itself received greater attention than did these curious and beautiful mediæval cloisters. Among a number of these elaborately ornamented galleries we will cite as examples of exquisite and costly cloister work—In Italy, the cloisters of S. Paul outside the Walls (Rome), and S. John Lateran. In Sicily, that of Monreale. In France, among many, we would cite S. Trophinus of Arles, the Abbey of Moissac (Tarn et Garonne); the Abbey of Montmajeure (near Arles); the Abbey of Mont S. Michel (Normandy). Among cathedrals Rouen boasted an exceedingly magnificent cloister, as did the cathedrals of Toul, Soissons, Noyon, and many others. In England, the beautiful cloisters of Westminster Abbey are well known. Norwich possesses, too, a notable example, but the most famous by far in England are the cloisters of Gloucester, in some respects among the most beautiful in Europe, none possessing a roof comparable in richness and general

[1] Serlo, the Norman builder of much of the Gloucester Abbey, was the pupil of Lanfranc of Pavia. Possibly Serlo was himself an Italian. For nearly four months of the year the cloister-garth receives no sunshine, the sun's rays being intercepted by the tall nave roof which overshadows the garden of the cloister.

effect. The glory of the Gloucester roof gives a special character to the whole cloister.

Indeed, so costly and elaborate were the decorations lavished on this important portion of the monastic buildings of Middle Ages, that the wonderful display of art in the adornment of the monastic cloister seems, even in comparatively speaking early times, when the church was still at the height of its power and influence, long before the first mutterings of the discontent which culminated in the Reformation of the sixteenth century were heard, to have excited hostile criticism in some quarters.

The severest critics found no fault with the rich adornments and costly work bestowed upon the abbey or the cathedral. Nothing in those devout ages seemed too precious and magnificent for the house of God. But to some minds the contrast between the stern ascetic profession of the "religious" and the gorgeously ornate cloister where their "religious" worked and walked and meditated was too glaring. A poet of the thirteenth century of the Court of S. Louis of France gave utterance to those feelings which this splendour of many of the cloisters excited. It has been remarked that a Huguenot of the sixteenth century would hardly have expressed himself in severer language than we find is used in a passage of this thirteenth-century writer in his rythmical life of "Sainte Elysabel," where he speaks with marked disapprobation of the splendour and magnificence of the costly works so frequently visible in the "cloisters" of the monks of his day—men vowed to an austere life, and who, he writes: "Fors l'aumosne n'avoient riens," and who yet adorned their home with

"Ymages li monstrent bien fêtes
bien entaillies et portrétes
mult orent cousté, ce li samble."

And yet in spite of the reproaches of the grave and austere poet of the Court of S. Louis, the precursor of English Wyclif, and of the Puritans of a yet later age, few would be found now among the serious and devout critics of mediæval religion who would find fault with the tender and graceful fancies with which the monastic orders adorned the scenes of their life-work, which, according to their light, was wholly dedicated to God. The art-world and its mighty teaching power would indeed be poorer if the men who built and adorned these fair homes of prayer and study, had not, among the many crafts they cultivated with such untiring industry and conspicuous success, devoted themselves especially to architecture and its many exquisite and suggestive developments, outside as well as inside the walls of their church—architecture in their skilful hands becoming one of the most powerful instruments of popular education.

In this little descriptive story of the mediæval cloister, however, its principal uses must not be lost sight of. It was largely in the cloister that the great and never-to-be-forgotten work which resulted in the preservation of literature during the so-called Dark Ages was carried on. Besides labours exclusively connected with the preservation of literature, other works scarcely less important, of a cognate description, connected with art, the teaching of the young, &c., for several centuries found, too, their central home in the little porticoes or covered galleries running round the small green spot in the heart of the monastic buildings, the "Viridum Claustri," as the Gloucester chronicling monk quaintly styles it.

"In the matter of books, the Benedictines and the

other monastic orders were both producers and consumers. Books were written and illuminated in the "Scriptoria" in the cloisters, and preserved in their libraries, partly to be used by the more studious brethren of the house, partly to be consulted by those who came with proper credentials, or even to be lent on the deposit of a sufficient security."

There is little doubt that in every religious house, without exception, a library, great or small, existed. "When these monasteries were first founded, the few books which the community possessed were probably kept in the church, and subsequently, as the number of volumes increased, in presses in the cloisters, where the brethren passed many hours of each day in study. As time went on, some protection against cold and damp was provided in England and Northern Europe by glazing or partly glazing the cloister arcades, and by allowing the older monks at least, to occupy small enclosures called "carrels" or "carols," just large enough to hold a reader, his book, and a writing-desk." . . . It seems as though "the presses in the cloister were found sufficiently large to contain most monastic libraries until the end of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth century. Then, however, it became necessary, in many monasteries, to build a special room for those books which were not required for immediate use in the cloisters. The old system was not abandoned, the cloister being still used as the habitual place for study, but as it appears from the "Rites of Durham," brethren "might read in the library as well if they thought proper to do so."[1]

[1] Compare a paper by Mr. J. W. Clark, in the *Cambridge Antiquarian Society's Proceedings*, on "Libraries" at Christ Church, Canterbury, Citeaux, Clairvaux, &c., May 1894.

All these varied progressive arrangements are still existing in the monastic remains at Gloucester. It still retains the little "carrels," the ruined book-closets in the cloisters, and the subsequently erected library room. The library was probably built in the fifteenth century.

We read in the quaint old-world language of the "Rites of Durham" how these "carrels" were used by the elder members of the fraternity. "In the north syde of the cloister, from the corner over against the church dour to the corner over against the Dorter (dormitory) dour, was all fynely glased . . . and in every wyndowe iii Pewes or Carrells, where every one of the old Monks had his Carrell . . . that when they had dyned, they did resort to that place of (the) cloister; and there studied upon their books, every one in his Carrell, all the afternoune. until evensong time. This was there exercise every daie . . . And in every carrell was a desk to lye there bookes on. . . . And over against the Carrells against the Church wall did stand sertaine great Almeries (armories or cupboards) all full of Bookes (with great store of ancient manuscripts to help them in their study,) wherein dyd lye the old auncyent written Doctors of the Church and other profane authors, with dyverse other holie mens wourks, so that every one dyd studye what Doctor pleased them best, havinge the Librairie at all tymes to goe studie in besydes these Carrells."[1]

[1] The "Book of the Rites of Durham," containing a description of monuments, rites, and customs of the monastical church of Durham before the suppression, written traditionally in A.D. 1593, was printed in A.D. 1842 from trustworthy MSS. by the Surtees Society. Dr. Gasquet, the Roman Catholic historian, accurately describes the "Rites" as a document which stands alone as a connected account of the life in a great English monastic community at the very moment of its dissolution. It is the acknowledged work of one who had personal information, and had actually seen what he describes.

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

The Cloisters, South Walk with Carrels

The number of books contained in these monastic collections were of course varied. There were, however, more in the great majority of cases than is generally supposed. In the Benedictine house of Christ Church (Canterbury), the catalogue made by Henry de Estria, prior (A.D. 1285–1331) records, for instance, the titles of nearly three thousand works, bound in six hundred and ninety-eight volumes. At Citeaux (France) the mother-house of the Cistercian order, the library catalogue drawn up by John de Cisey, abbot, at the end of the fifteenth century, records the titles of twelve hundred MSS. and a few printed books (the great invention was still of quite recent date).

A portion of these books at Citeaux were divided into separate divisions. The following classification in the catalogue throws considerable light upon the use made of their library by the monks of Citeaux. They were divided as follows: Books of the choir, church, and cloister; books in daily use; books chained on desks in the chapter-house; books placed in the cloister to be divided among the brothers of the order; books on the small desks in the cloister.[1]

The books used in the many hours spent by the monks in their still cloister included famous writings of many lands and of many ages. Theology, although naturally holding the prominent place, by no means constituted the exclusive study of the scholar-monk. No knowledge, it has been well said, was strange to them—philosophy, grammar, versification, botany, mechanics, astronomy, geometry, and medicine all being included. In his con-

[1] Montalembert ("Monks of the West," vol. vi., book xviii., chap. iv.) gives a good many interesting details on the subject of the numbers of the books in these mediæval monkish libraries.

nection with medicine, the monk or friar was the chief, well-nigh the only mediæval physician. All these subjects were more or less the objects of their studies. But in the varied range of letters, the great masterpieces of classic literature were to many a monk the great pleasure of his somewhat monotonous existence. These were guarded with extreme care, and scrupulously and carefully copied in their exquisite handwriting.

Few indeed would have been the remains of the ever-fresh writers of Greece and Rome, had it not been for the patient industry and well-directed taste of the monk during those long centuries of war and tumult and general disorder which followed the break-up of the Roman power. S. Peter Damian, the friend of the Pope, Gregory VII. (Hildebrand), thus curiously apologises for the monkish devotion to classic writers: "To study poets and philosophers for the purpose of rendering the wit more keen, and fitter to penetrate the mysteries of the Divine Word, is to spoil the Egyptians of their treasures in order to build a tabernacle for God."[1]

S. Anselm, Abbot of Bec (Normandy), afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury at the end of the eleventh century, specially recommends to his pupils the study of Virgil and other classical writers, with, however, this note of warning, "*Exceptis his in quibus aliqua turpitudo sonat.*"[2] Indeed at times so sedulous had become the study of the great pagan writers in this cloister life, that we find grave warnings addressed to the monks by eminent monastic teachers, fearful lest this passion for classics should too completely absorb their thoughts.

A curious reminder to the studious monk of the inferiority of pagan to Christian writers and commen-

[1] B. Peter Damiani, Opusc. xxxii. c. 9. [2] S. Anselm, Epist. i. 55.

tators on the Holy Scripture, is found in a direction of the "Customs of Cluny." When in the cloister, where absolute silence during many hours was rigidly enforced, a brother wished to attract the librarian's attention, the rule was, if a Christian work were required, to extend the hand, making the motion as if turning over the leaves of a book; but if a pagan writing were desired, the monk was directed to scratch the ear as a dog does, because, so the regulation explained, "unbelievers may well be compared to dogs." [1]

But, after all, the work done in these cloisters which has been the most useful as well as the most enduring was the constant transcription of manuscripts. We have already dwelt on the priceless boon conferred on later ages by these unwearied scribes. For centuries there was no printing-press, no scribes save these monks to hand down the literary treasures of the great ages of Greece and Rome. Their unremitting diligence alone kept burning the light of the past in those cold, silent, solitary cloister cells called now scriptoria, now carrels. Their patient industry alone preserved to us the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament, the precious words of men, some of whom had talked with Apostles and the pupils of the Apostles, of teachers such as Irenæus, Clement, and Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Augustine, and Jerome. The writings of that long line of illustrious fathers and doctors of the Catholic Church of the first four or five centuries would have been lost irretrievably had not generation after generation of monkish scholar-scribes toiled unweariedly in their still cloister chambers.

Well may we, who live in the sunlit evening of the

[1] Martène "De Antiq. Monach. Ritibus," l.v. c. 18. Quoted by Montalembert, book xviii. chap. iv.

world's long eventful course, gaze with pathetic interest on the comparatively few undisturbed remains of these famous homes of learning where such enduring work was done. In our cloister at Gloucester we possess one of these precious relics of the great and industrious past, one of the most perfect that exists in England, perhaps in the whole of Northern Europe.

In these cloister "carrels" were executed, too, those tender and delicate examples of mediæval colouring which adorn the more precious monkish manuscripts. Miniatures of eminent persons, representations of saints, and of holy men, graceful and fantastic borders to the pages, more rarely, though not unfrequently, little landscapes, churches, and an infinite number of initial letters. Many of these exquisite illuminations of the Gospels, of "Books of Hours," missals, and of the more prized and frequently used volumes, are still existing; the colour and the gold of the unknown artist as fresh and beautiful as in those far-back days when the great army of monk-artists toiled without hope of earthly recompense or recognition in their silent chilly workshops which fringed the cloister walks. Ornate and elaborately designed bindings of manuscripts formed the special craft of a few of these "religious." Cassiodorus, who in his day had been one of the foremost statesmen of the West, and who spent his later years (first half of the sixth century) in one of the famous monasteries of his own foundation (in Calabria), thus commends this beautiful art of binding, quaintly urging the monk-scribes to cultivate this special craft, so that the beauty of the Holy Writings might be set in the splendour of a rich cover, and so practically exemplify the words of the Lord Jesus who, when

he bade His elect to the heavenly banquet, desired that they should be robed in wedding garments.

And all this useful and often beautiful work was carried on, it must be remembered, often, well-nigh always, amidst the circumstances of an austere self-denying life. The cloister might be, not unfrequently was, a marvel of grace and beauty, but it was utterly devoid of what in modern phraseology is termed "comfort." The cold, especially in England and in the northern countries of Europe, so rich in monastic establishments of the first rank, was very severely felt in these fireless cloister cells of the monk-scribe and the monk-artist, although in the late mediæval period glazing was largely introduced with the view of rendering somewhat more tolerable the condition of these unwearied toilers for God. In the books they wrote and adorned with such care and skill we occasionally light upon silent pathetic testimonies to the hardships endured by the monk-scribe, such as Louis of Wissobrunn wrote at the end of the copy he had made of St. Jerome's commentary on Daniel—

> "Sedibus externis hic librum quem modo cernis
> Dum scripsit, friguit, et quod cum lumine solis
> Scribere non potuit, *perfecit lumine noctis:*
> Sis Deus istorum merces condigna laborum."

Such, too, as we find at the bottom of a Gospel book of the eleventh century—

> "Nauta rudis pelagi ut sævis ereptus ab undis,
> In portum veniens, pectora læta tenet;
> *Sic scriptor fessus,* calamum sub calce laboris
> Deponens, habeat pectora læta quidem."[1]

[1] Quoted by Montalembert, "Monks of the West," book xviii. chap. iv., where other similar quotations and many valuable references for those curious in this forgotten page of monastic life, will be found.

The great variety of studies pursued in the cloister upon which we have been dwelling, and particularly the study of art, including architecture, painting, sculpture, music, was no late development in the monastic life. S. Benedict, the great founder of Western monasticism, in his "Rule" had assigned to every monk four hours daily for reading, and in the case of the studious this limit was doubtless often greatly exceeded. There were, of course, among the great army of "religious" many whose tastes lay in other directions, and whose time and talents were occupied in other ways. The work and life of a monastic community would supply many kinds of employment at once practical and active, both within the house itself and abroad in the farms and estates belonging to the monastery, but as a general rule study in its many divisions, including artistic work in its varied forms, was well loved by a very large number of the brothers of a mediæval house. "We have *all*," wrote the monk William of S. Remy, who became abbot of that famous house in A.D. 1071, "an incredible fondness for reading, but there is not one of us who would dare prefer the pleasure of reading to the duty of obeying." From the beginning of western monasticism S. Benedict in his rule had foreseen that lovers of art would surely arise in the cloister, and he provided with his usual wisdom for the encouragement of such, only attaching to the life-work of an artist-monk one condition—*humility*.[1]

There was another and important use made of these cloisters. In them were held the schools of the novices and of other children and youths entrusted to the monks

[1] "Artifices si sunt in monasterio, cum omni humilitate et reverentiâ faciant ipsas artes, si permisserit Abbas."—Rule, c. 57.

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

The Little Cloisters

for education. Such a school was to be found certainly in every religious house of any importance. It was the common custom that all monasteries should receive scholars who came to them from all sides. Some houses became especially famous for their schools, and in such cases the cloister would not suffice for the numbers of the young attracted by any special notoriety of the house as a centre of education. But, as a rule, a portion of the cloister proper was set aside for such a school. The north side, or at least a considerable portion of it, was devoted for this purpose at Gloucester. Traces of the novices' games still can be seen plainly carved on the stone bench which still runs alongside the wall of this part of the Gloucester cloister.

We read the following description of such a cloister school in the "Rites of Durham" already quoted: "Over against the Treasury door was a fair stall of wainscot where the Novices were taught. And the Master of the Novices had a pretty seat of wainscott, adjoining to the south side of the Treasury door, over against the stall where the Novices were taught. And there he taught the said Novices both forenoon and afternoon.

"No strangers or other persons were suffered to molest or trouble the said Novices or Monks in their Carrels, while they were at their books in the cloister. For to that purpose there was a porter appointed to keep the cloister door." The "Rites" went on to say that "the Novices had theire chambers severall by himselfe in the south end of the Dorter (Dormitory)."

Durandus, Bishop of Mende, the famous thirteenth-century liturgiologist, whose views, as representing Catholic mediæval thought on matters connected with ritual,

symbolism, &c., we have many times referred to, sees in the cloister the type of the heavenly Paradise—when the dwellers will be of one heart and one mind, when all thought will be centred in the will and the love of God, when all will dwell together, and will have all things common. In the cloister, says the Bishop of Mende, there are four walls, which represent (1) the low estimation in which every man should conceive of himself; (2) the low estimation in which he should hold the world; (3) the love of one's neighbour; (4) the love for God. One very singular comparison of Durandus calls for especial notice. The diversity of dwellings and of offices in the cloister prefigures the diversity of dwellings and of rewards in the heavenly kingdom. "For in my Father's house are many mansions, as the Lord said."[1]

The extraordinary magnificence often displayed in many of the more considerable mediæval cloisters has been alluded to. We have in Gloucester a celebrated example of one of them. The present cloisters were built by Abbot Horton, A.D. 1351–1377, and completed by Abbot Froucester, A.D. 1381–1412. They replaced other and less ornate buildings dating from Norman times, the outer walls of the old cloister still remaining. Although the monastic furniture—the seats and desks of the carrels, the various curtains dividing the several parts, are gone, although the beautiful stone panelling of the fourteenth and fifteenth century walls is sorely defaced and scarred, in spite of the look of general desolation which a long unused building naturally presents, these cloisters, now so silent and deserted, are still one of the architectural gems of Northern Europe, and every portion of them, happily, is sufficiently preserved to enable us to trace

[1] *Durandus of Mende*, "Rationale," book i. chap. i. xlii.–xliii.

fairly accurately the old sites once occupied by monk and novice, when these cloisters were the heart and centre of the busy life of the great Benedictine community dwelling and working here until the day when King Henry VIII. dissolved and broke up the famous house of Gloucester (A.D. 1540).

Their chief glory is the roof—which perhaps replaced an older wooden covering with which the former cloister was originally roofed. Traces of the destruction of the original wooden (Norman) roof are still plainly visible in the chapter-house, where, in the western wall which abuts the cloister, the stone-work is reddened by the flames which at some time prior to 1351 destroyed the old wooden roof of the cloister. The cloisters now are entirely covered with a massive stone vaulting of the kind known as fan-tracery. No vaulting has ever been devised by any school of builders which presents so splendid an appearance as this peculiar form. It is especially an English "use," and belongs to the later development of the "Perpendicular" artists, and seems, as we have already hinted above, as though this special development were due to a reaction against the excessive severity and austerity of the Perpendicular style. Probably from its costliness it never became common. With some modifications we find noble instances of this perfect form of a Gothic roof in Henry VII.'s chapel at Westminster, and in the gorgeous chapels of King's College, Cambridge, and of S. George's, Windsor. There are a few other fine examples in England, but these are perhaps the most notable. As far as can be ascertained from contemporary records the fan-vaulting of the beautiful cloisters we are describing is the earliest known instance of this rich vaulting. It seems as though to the traditional architectural school of the

Gloucester Benedictines was owing the invention of this, the noblest style of Gothic roofing. It adds no little interest to the memories of the great Benedictine house whose story and traditions we have taken as the basis of our little study, when we think how in its quiet cloister walks monk architects once lived and thought and toiled, who gave England its peculiar style of architecture, *the Perpendicular*, and who supplemented their first work by the subsequent "invention" of the matchless fan-tracery vaulting. At the same period, viz., in the later half of the fourteenth century, the cloister walls were richly panelled in stone, somewhat after the fashion of the new work of the Perpendicular artists of Edward III. in the choir and transepts, and the windows, as we see them now, with their fine tracery, were inserted, the upper half being entirely glazed throughout; the lower part on the south side, where the monk's carrels were placed, and on the north side, where the novices were taught, were also glazed. On the west an arrangement of wooden shutters appears to have been provided; on the east it is uncertain, as later restoration work has obliterated the original marks of glazing or shutters in the lower lights, and no record remains to tell us of the original arrangement.

Although some of the great monastic buildings opening directly out of the cloister were destroyed by Henry VIII. as "superfluous buildings" at the time of the suppression (A.D. 1540), notably the great piles of the "dorter" (dormitory) and of the "frater" (refectory), enough still remains for us to trace out clearly the way of life led by the monks of this renowned Benedictine community. We will briefly describe each of the four sides of the cloister as they exist now.

The Cloister

THE SOUTH CLOISTER.

The *south* cloister—that abutting on the cathedral, the abbey as it was termed before the suppression—we have already spoken of. The twenty little "carrels," or study chambers, are perfect, with this exception, the wooden fittings for writing or reading have disappeared, but the remains of the book closets (two in number) can be clearly traced in the garth or garden round which the cloister runs. Two little doors out of the east cloister, communicating with these closets, exist. These book closets were arranged at the south end of the east cloister, so as not to interfere with the twenty "carrels." The library, the subsequent addition, constructed, as we have already explained, when the number of books was multiplied, towards the end of the fourteenth century, is still used as the cathedral library, and is approached, as in the old times, by a winding staircase out of the east cloister.

THE EAST CLOISTER.

In the *east* cloister, close to the door of the staircase leading to the library, is a wide vaulted passage or small cloister of some length, leading to the outer garden. It was originally entered from the east cloister by a wide arch, and is ornamented with a wall-arcade on both sides; it is roofed with a plain barrel vault without ribs. This little cloister is of most ancient date (the eleventh century). A passage in the "Rites of Durham" guides us to its original purpose in the daily monastic life. "The monnkes were accostomed every daie, aftere thei dyned, to goe thorough the cloister . . . and streight into the scentorie (cemetery) garth, where all the monnkes were

buried" [The monks' cemetery at Gloucester was in the garden south of the abbey, and this little cloister would be their easiest way of reaching it from the great cloister]; "and thei did stand all bair-headed, a certain longe space, praieing amongs the toumbes for there brethren' soules being buryed there, and when they had done there prayers thei did returne to the cloyster, and there did studie with there bookes until iij of the clocke that they went to evensong. This was there dalie exercise and studie, every day after they had dyned."

For some unknown reason this little side-cloister leading to the "garden of death" seems to have been disused, and the arch or door of entrance closed, apparently towards the end of the fourteenth century. (It is now reopened.) Close to the door of this little cloister, in the same east cloister, is the entrance to the chapter-house (*capitulum*). The chapter-house was ever a prominent feature in the scenes of the daily life of a Benedictine community. In it all the members of the society assembled every morning, generally speaking about eleven o'clock, the abbot, or in his absence the first prior, presiding. Portions of the Rule of the "Order" were sometimes read, together with an address or a short instruction by the presiding monk. "Discipline" was inflicted, often in the form of scourging, upon any who had formally offended against the "Rule," and any necessary public business belonging to "the House" was brought before the community then assembled. The chapter-house of Gloucester is a very large, plain, vaulted hall, and, with the exception of the east end, which was rebuilt in the fifteenth century, it remains in its general aspect much as it left the Norman builder's hands in the eleventh century. Certain distinguished persons, in some way connected with the abbey as donors

Gloucester Cathedral: the Cloisters, E. Walk.

and patrons, have been buried beneath the pavement of the floor. In Leland's time (Leland was a secretary of Henry VIII.) the names of some of the buried great ones, written in black letter on the walls, were legible. They can still be read. They were Norman nobles of very high degree; two of them, at least, seem to have been contemporaries of the Conqueror. Walter de Lacy was laid to rest here as early as 1085. Amongst other notables the name of Richard Strongbow appears. It was in this ancient chamber, presumably, that King William held that "deep speech" which led to the making of "Domesday." It was, too, in this great and venerable chapter-house that the famous Gloucester Parliament, under Richard II., assembled in A.D. 1378.

Lower down in the east cloister the door of the dorter (the dormitory) speaks of another phase of monastic life. The vast building to which this door led is gone. Only a solitary fragment of a window-shaft remains outside to tell of the great pile erected in the early years of the fourteenth century, where the monks passed the few hours of the night allowed for sleep. The "Rites of Durham" give us some idea of the interior of a great Benedictine dormitory in the fourteenth or fifteenth century. "A faire large house called the 'dorter,' where all the monnks and the novices did lye, every monnke having a little chamber of wainscott by themselves, and their wyndowes towardes the cloister, every window serving for one chambre." (There seems to have been a partition between each chamber. It is doubtful if this was generally the case in early mediæval times.) In every one of these "wyndowes a deske to support there bookes for there studdie." Connected with the dorter, at its farther end, was a considerable building known, as the

reredorter (necessaries). This last was generally so built as to be traversed by the great drain of the abbey, into which a running stream was turned, and kept it always clean. The site of this building at Gloucester, as far as can be now ascertained, was east or north-east of the dorter. The running stream is still there, though hidden.

The same cloister door of which we have been speaking, which led to the stair by which the 'dorter' was approached, opened also into a large chamber situated on the ground floor. This chamber, of course, has disappeared with the "dorter" building. This great room was known as "the common house." It is described in the "Rites of Durham" as having "a fyre kept in yt all wynter, for the monnkes to cume and warme them at, being allowed no fyre but that onely, except the masters and officers of the house, who had there severall fyres."

THE NORTH CLOISTER.

At the east end of the *north* cloister is another doorway, leading into a vaulted passage or small cloister, mostly composed of Early English work of the thirteenth century. This little early English cloister connects the main cloister with the infirmary or "farmary" cloister. The "farmary" cloister is a beautiful and picturesque piece of Perpendicular work, with five traceried openings on each side admirably preserved, surrounding a little "garth" or garden about 54 feet square. This garden was attached to the infirmary, and probably served originally as a herb-garden or "herbarium." The infirmary itself, with its chapel and house of the Monk Infirmarer and other dependencies, was mostly destroyed by Henry VIII. at the time of the suppression. It was

evidently an important and stately building, and originally consisted of a great hall, built like the nave of a church, with aisles and clerestory windows above. This was the dormitory of the "farmary," with its little cubicles like the great "dorter." It was erected in the thirteenth century. Six arches of the original pile still remain, a picturesque and pathetic ruin. Part of the lodgings of the infirmary, which escaped the original destruction, have been incorporated into one of the present canonical houses.

Those who are not acquainted with the customs of the great Benedictine order wonder at the evident size and importance of the infirmary buildings, which were ever attached to such a monastery as that of Gloucester. But men forget that the infirmary was something more than a hospital for the sick of the community: besides being a hospital, it was also the dwelling of the old and infirm brethren of the house, and also of those monks who had been professed fifty years, and were then no longer bound to adhere strictly to the "Rule" of the Order.

Nowhere, perhaps, wrote Bishop Westcott of Durham, is the thoughtful tenderness of Benedict's rule so conspicuous as in the directions as to the sick. "Before all things, and above all things," said the holy founder of the famous order, which has endured for so many centuries, and has wrought such a mighty work for the Church, "must care be given to the sick; they must be served, and Christ in them." In accordance with these directions of the revered and sainted Benedict, the sick, the aged, and the infirm were ever tenderly watched and cared for. They had their own separate buildings, often, as at Gloucester, of great magnificence, including their special hall and chapel, their own officers and attendants.

At Peterborough, to take another well-known example, the infirmary contains some of the most exquisite work which remains.

This loving tenderness was continued to the last, extreme care being taken to soothe the last hours of the dying. "No pages of the monastic records preserved to us are more full of human interest than those which describe with careful detail the parting gifts and words and devotions of some lost master." In some cases, at the request of the dying, ashes were strewed on the floor in the form of a cross, and upon this strange couch, his old friends and companions praying round him, the monk "passed" into the joy of his Lord. "Besides the happy death, the death of the saints (*mors felix*), there was the joyous death (*mors hilaris*) of the simple monk, glad to die as he had been glad to live. Monastic annals are full of details of the end of these servants of God. They tell us, for example, how the monk Gerold of S. Gall gave up his soul, glorifying God, smiling at his brethren, and saluting the saints whom he saw gather round him. They tell us also how, at Monte Cassino, the monk Randicius, on his deathbed stopped the chanting of the monks by saying, "Hush, hush! do you not hear the Laudes sounding in heaven? Do you not see the angels who are singing, with their garments and their faces shining like snow? I conjure you, in God's name, be silent, and let me enjoy the sweetness of their song!" And as he said these words he died.[1]

When a monk died, a messenger was despatched to many religious communities associated together for this

[1] Quoted by Montalembert, "Monks of the West," book xviii. chap. vi., from Ekkehard, Lib. Benedict MS., S. Gall, p. 154, and from Chron. Casin. lib. iii. c. 51, ap. Muratori.

purpose, with a mortuary roll, having at the head an announcement of the death, and a short account of the deceased.

Each community to whom the message was sent acknowledged receiving the roll, by writing upon it a promise of prayer for the soul of the departed, "and thus the death of a brother became an occasion for renewing the ties and bonds of a larger fellowship."[1]

At the western end of this north cloister is a second early English doorway, now filled with poor stained glass. This was the entrance to the "Frater" (Refectory, the word "frater" being the English equivalent of the Latin "refectorium," the prefix being dropped. This usual English abbreviated form "freytour" is used by Chaucer and other early writers).

This "Frater" or Refectory at Gloucester was a great hall over 130 feet long, and about 90 broad, and reached the entire length of the north cloister. It was raised above a large undercroft used for cellarage and for stores, and was reached by a broad flight of steps through the cloister door just mentioned. It was entirely destroyed at the time of the suppression, being reckoned among "the superfluous buildings." In this north cloister there is a curious opening in the wall on the side of the garth, which apparently was the place where the bell which summoned the brethren to meals in the neighbouring "frater" was hung. Opposite to the "Frater" door, but a little more to the east, is a large and very beautiful lavatory, one of the most perfect that has been preserved to us among our English monastic remains. In its present

[1] Compare Bishop Westcott (Durham), "A Benedictine Monk," "Gloucester Cathedral Records," Part I. p. 59.

condition, it dates from some time early in the fifteenth century.

This lavatory projects some eight feet into the garth, and is roofed with exquisite fan-tracery stone vaulting, a miniature copy of the elaborate and costly vaulting for which the Gloucester cloister is justly famous. The lavatory is entered from the cloister by eight tall arches with glazed traceried openings above. The loveliness of this annexe of the cloister, devoted to such a homely purpose, tells us of the extreme care and attention which the monk-architect devoted to every part of the monastic buildings, regardless altogether of time and cost.

Facing the lavatory is a highly decorated closet or almery, where the towels were hung. A somewhat similar "towel almery" in the Durham monastery is thus described in the "Rites": "All the forepart of the almeries was carved work [this is exactly repeated in the Gloucester almery], for to give ayre to the towels; and iii dors in the forepart of each almery, and a lock on every doure, and every monnke had a key for the said almeryes, wherein did hinge in every almerie, cleane towels for the monnkes to dry their hands on when they washed and went to dinner."

But the chief interest connected with this north cloister is that it was partly assigned to the novices. Probably a heavy leathern curtain hung at the end of the lavatory, and another at the east end of the cloister, thus "separating off" the school.

We have already given a sketch of the "novices'" studying arrangements from the "Rites." Of course all traces of the wooden desks, partitions, and seats which served the teachers and students in their work hours have long disappeared, only, curiously enough, the

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

The Cloisters, North Walk with Recess for Lavatorium

pupils of the long-vanished Benedictines have left us records of their games. On the stone bench which runs along the wall are scratched, some with almost artistic care, others carelessly enough, little game-boards, on which the boys brought up at Gloucester when Richard II. and Henry VI. were reigning used to play, with little pebbles and bones, old-world games, such as nine men's morris, fox and geese, &c. There are a few other similar specimens of these game-boards to be found scratched on the stones here and there in other parts of the cloister, and in one instance on the cathedral stair, but naturally it is in the "novices'" apartments in the cloister that these game-boards are chiefly found, and in spite of the wear and tear of perhaps five hundred years, and the often mischievous zeal for restoration of what seems to the eye worn, scarred, and discoloured, are still plainly discernible.[1]

THE WEST CLOISTER.

In the west cloister, a door with somewhat elaborate tracery led into the court of the house formerly appropriated to the abbot, and later, after the abbey became exceedingly wealthy through the offerings made by pilgrims to the shrine of Edward II., about the middle of the fourteenth century, when the abbot built for himself a larger dwelling, assigned to the lord prior. This house, since the Reformation, has been the dwelling of the dean,

[1] Compare an interesting paper by Mr. Micklethwaite, architect of Westminster Abbey, on "The Indoor Games of School-boys in the Middle Ages." Similar game-boards have been found in the cloisters of Westminster, Canterbury, Norwich, Chichester, Salisbury, &c.—"Archæological Journal," vol. xlix. p. 319, December 1892.

and in its eastern portion is perhaps the oldest dwelling-house in England. At the south end of this cloister a doorway, or more probably a heavy curtain, opened into a largish vaulted Norman chamber, little altered since the closing years of the eleventh century, which led directly from the cloister into the outer court of the monastery (now called College Green). This ancient chamber was used as the monks' parlour. It was there they talked, when occasion arose, with strangers, visitors, and friends. There too, no doubt, as in a similar chamber at Durham, used to assemble itinerant merchants desirous of showing to the officials and monks of the abbey their various wares for purchase.[1]

[1] Compare generally for many of the details lightly sketched in this chapter of "The Cloister," Mr. St. John Hope's scholarly paper in the "Records of Gloucester Cathedral," iii., Part I., 1897, where the various archæological questions connected with the striking cloister of Gloucester are dealt with at considerable length.

CHAPTER XXVI

ON THE LIFE LED BY THE MONK

After speaking at length of the different parts of a great mediæval abbey, we have dealt with some detail on the immediate surroundings of such a church, on the dwelling-place of one of those monastic communities by whose loving hands those great homes of prayer, the abbeys and magnificent churches of the Middle Ages, were mostly designed and erected. We had, it will be remembered, shown before in the early pages of our work, how the great revival of religion in the eleventh century was also mainly owing to the *spirit of monasticism* which was revived and developed in the Burgundian community of Cluny and its daughter houses. A picture, then, of a great typical monastery seemed a fitting sequel to the little study in which we have been engaged. Before we close it, it will be well to give a brief account of the daily life led by such a community in the cloister and in its surrounding chambers. It was, as will be seen, no slothful or self-indulgent existence, as is too often imagined. It was indeed a high and lofty ideal which the true monk aimed at, and we may consider in many instances he fairly reached it. The ideal had, it is true, certain grave faults which we shall notice before we close this concluding chapter of the work.

Prayer or praise in the abbey or the church, worship

of Almighty God, was the central thought of the monastic life; but handicraft of various kinds, and study, be it remembered, were strictly enjoined as the complement of religious exercises.

Seven times in the twenty-four hours the brethren assembled in the common prayer house—the abbey. But the prayers and readings in the Holy Scriptures, the addresses when given, and the musical part of the services were, as a rule, *short* and varied, in order to secure, as far as possible, concentrated attention during the necessarily protracted period occupied in their many services. Readers and singers, too, were chosen out of the community likely to attract by their skill.

The general scheme of the monastic day was based originally by the great Benedictine founder upon two well-known verses of Psalm cxix. 62, 164, "At *midnight* I will rise to give thanks unto Thee," and "*Seven times a day* do I praise Thee."

The life-aim of a monastic community was the ideal typified by the lights which, on the altar of their church, never were suffered to go out. This life-aim was beautifully expressed in words by the scribe of the "Durham Rites" thus: "*The house was always watchinge to God.*"

The ordinary daily rule of a Benedictine house like that of Gloucester was as follows:—

At midnight (having retired to the dormitory generally between 7 and 8 P.M.), the brethren were aroused and went into the abbey, and went through the service termed *vigils.* At the close of the night vigils, if there remained a considerable interval before daybreak, the monks usually returned to rest. *Matins,* according to the rule of Benedict, were held "at the beginning of light, and

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

ENTRANCE TO THE CHAPTER-HOUSE

the service of the first hour (*prime*) followed directly after.[1]

Then followed a space of time spent in work of some kind. Manual labour on the part of some, study on the part of others, until about 8 o'clock A.M., when the monks washed and then went to the service of the third hour (*tierce*), which service was immediately followed by the first mass said in great abbeys at the matutinal altar. Some accounts of the "monastic day" speak of a light informal refreshment partaken of about 8 o'clock.

The formal meeting of "the house" in the Chapter-house took place about 11 A.M., when public business belonging to the community was transacted, punishment was inflicted, and sometimes apparently a short address was delivered by the abbot or presiding prior.

The service of *sext*, followed by the second mass, was held in the church after the Chapter-room meeting.

Then came the principal meal of the day—dinner. Following dinner was that solemn visit above alluded to of the brethren to the cemetery, when for a time they tarried bareheaded in prayer among the tombs of the departed in the quiet garden of the dead.

When the night, as in summer, had been very short, a short "siesta" was allowed, but the general custom seems to have been that work or study was enjoined after the dinner hour until about 3 P.M., when the services of *nones* and *vespers* were held in the church.

At 5 P.M., or somewhat later, according to the time of year, a second meal was served. At 7 P.M. came the last

[1] The above general scheme of "Hours," &c., is, on the whole, the usual mediæval one. But it was slightly modified by the different seasons of the year, and by the special customs of the particular religious "house." Changes also were made on the occasion of the more important festivals, &c.

service of the day, *compline*, and then the monks retired to the dormitory for rest. Probably before 8 o'clock all was silent in the house for the brief night's repose.

We have no definite statements as to any exemptions from this perpetual round of services which must have taken up so very large a portion of each day. Of course those monks whose duties took them away from the abbey, on the farms and esates belonging to the community situated at some distance, were exempted from regular attendance, as were also, of course, those who were told off for preaching, or for other duties connected with serving churches dependent on the "house." It is also probable that those engaged in important manual offices, such as carving, gilding, painting, were also partly relieved, as were too, possibly, those engaged in important literary work. But we have no certain information here.

That literary work of various kinds, besides the mere mechanical occupation as copyists of MSS., and ordinary illuminators of MSS., was encouraged is quite clear. The elaborate arrangements for study in the cloister; the provision for books in the library and book-closets; the notice in the "Rites of Durham," already quoted, of desks provided for books even in the dormitory, all point to this.

The question of artificial light in these monasteries is left, however, somewhat doubtful, when it is remembered for how many months artificial light would be needed for those who studied and wrote in the long early hours of the morning as well as of the evening, in the cloister as well as in the dormitory. We possess little information generally here, but two references in the "Rites" especially speak of artificial light:

1st, *in the Church*, we read how "there was standinge in the south pillar of the Quire door of the lanthorne . . . a foure-squared stoun which hath been finely wrought, in every square a large fine image, whereon did stand a foure-squared stone above that, which had twelve cressetts wrought in that stone which was filled with tallow, and every night one of them was lighted when the day was gone, and did burne to give light to the monks at midnight, when they came to mattins."

2nd, *in the Dorter*. We read again, "In either end of the said dorter was a four (fair) stone, wherein was a dozen cressets wrought in either stone, being ever filled as they were needed, to give light to the monks and novices, when they rose to their mattins at midnight, and for their other necessarye uses." But more than this would be required for study purposes. It is well known to those who have attended the night services at the Grande Chartreuse, how each monk brings with him a small lighted lamp to the service, a relic probably of far-back usage.

The frequent fires which (especially in the early Middle Ages) so often seem to have raged in these communities, with singularly destructive results, were no doubt often occasioned by the somewhat careless arrangements in this matter of artificial lighting. The Gloucester Abbey "records" mention several of these terrible conflagrations, and the marks of these great fires are still visible on the masonry of the church, of the cloister, and of the chapter-house.

The responsibity of governing and administering such a house as that of Gloucester was divided over a great number of office-bearers. Indeed the petty offices and posts distributed among the community were so numerous

that it has been computed that nearly half the whole body were more or less engaged in this manner. It was a wise provision in the Benedictine order, faithfully carried out in the days of its power and influence, which interested so large a number of its members in the responsibility either of maintaining discipline, or in the duties belonging to some of the various departments of its business.

But the real government was virtually in the hands of a few leading obedientiaries. These were—in the front rank—the *abbot*, or *prior*, as the chief of some houses was termed, and with him were associated, according to the size and importance of the community, a second, and even a third prior. In the case of the very important houses the abbot wore a mitre, and sat among the peers of Parliament. In Gloucester this dignity was only conferred in A.D. 1381, Abbot Froucester being the first *mitred* abbot of the "house." The *prior* in an abbatial house was ever a person of high dignity. He had his separate dwelling, his attendants, often his private chapel. In the absence of the abbot he was supreme in the monastery.

After these high officials of the first class ranked a few other chiefs of important departments, who had separate lodgings of their own. The *sacrist* had usually the charge of the many services, ordinary and extraordinary; the library was often under his care; he frequently acted as chancellor or secretary of the community. The *precentor* arranged the music and the singing which formed a considerable part of the many services, and which served to break the monotony which must have accompanied a life so many hours of which were spent in worship in the sanctuary. This high

official also arranged the frequent processions to the church through the cloister, and after the abbot or prior he exercised the chief authority in the church. The *circa* was an official charged with watching over the discipline of the services. It was his duty to note who was absent, and to report the same to the chapter when formally assembled in their daily meeting. The same officer would, too, when all were met together in the choir, in the long night or early morning services, go his quiet round in the dimly lighted church, watching carefully to see if any weary brother had fallen asleep, in which case he would at once arouse him to take his share in the perpetual round of praise and prayer.

The *custos operum*, or *master of the works*, ranked high among these prominent "obedientiaries" of a large community. No easy duties were his to watch over and to keep in repair the abbey church and the vast hive of buildings[1] which clustered round the house of God. The monk was ever busy in planning and designing new features in his church, and in the conventual buildings beneath its shadow. For some five hundred years the great cathedral, its cloisters, and the adjacent piles of the Infirmary, guest-house, refectory, &c., which we have chosen as our special example, was being constantly altered, added to, more richly adorned, and in the course of these operations new styles of architecture were ever and anon introduced. The *custos operum* (master of the works), in all these works so loved of the monk, was naturally supreme—was the principal adviser of the abbot in any of the more

[1] We have only mentioned in our foregoing sketch a few of the more important and interesting of these buildings. The *Guest-House*, the *Kitchen*, the *Storehouses*, and many others, have not been alluded to.

important changes. We who, after long ages, are content simply to admire and to copy as best we can what the vanished monk has done in those abbeys, cathedrals, and cloisters, which even in their defaced and scarred condition are still among the glories of England, owe a great debt to many a nameless "master of the works" whose name is unknown, and whose story is unrecorded even in the chronicles of the "house" for which he worked so well.

The *treasurer*, or *receiver*, whose name still survives as one of the office-bearers among the residentiary canons of our cathedrals, had the duty of receiving and accounting for the rents, &c., of the abbey farms. It was this official who had to meet, as best he could, the often exorbitant claims of the crown on the occasion of a foreign war or other state contingency.

The *hordarian* was associated with the *cellarer* and *refectioner* in arranging for the bodily needs of the large company who made up the community. The somewhat barbarous title was derived from the old term, "hoard" (treasure), which came to signify the supplies of food required for the refectory and the infirmary, and the separate tables of the abbot, the prior, and the chief obedientiaries.

The *guest-master* in a large monastery had many and important duties. Generous hospitality to all comers was a common feature in mediæval monastic life. The magnificent ruins of the guest-house or halls in some of our monastic remains serve as a reminder how carefully the work of providing for the wandering stranger was carried out. The monastery was the home of the merchant, the pilgrim to the many shrines; the poor traveller as well as the noble and the wealthy, ever met with kind

and even lavish hospitality in these houses. In the "Rites of Durham" we read of the "Geste Haule providing intertaynment to all staits both noble and gentle, and what degree soever that came thither as strangers," . . . as furnishing generally "all things necessarie for traveillers, and with all this interteynment contynewying, not willing or commanding any man to departe, upon his honest and good behavyour."

The *infirmarian* was the obedientiary who was over that large establishment of which we have spoken, where dwelt the sick, the aged, and infirm "religious." Great care was taken in the selection of this responsible official. In many cases he possessed a wide knowledge of medicine and surgery. In some great "houses" a physician was attached to the community. We read in the Registry of Abbot Braunche of Gloucester of special allowances being set aside for such an official "for his good service in the art of medicine and laudable counsel." This physician of Gloucester was bound to be faithful to the abbot and convent, and to keep their secrets. Save on certain carefully specified holy days he was ever to be resident in the monastery, and at hand.

The titles of these chief obedientiaries varied somewhat in the different monasteries. But the foregoing little sketch fairly represents the names of the officers and the duties of the men who occupied the chief and most responsible positions in a great Benedictine house.

The rough caricatures of the monk, drawn almost entirely after the undoubted period of deterioration had set, towards the close of the fifteenth century—a period when men were too excited by the many grave and agitating Reformation questions to be fair and just—give a

very false idea of the existence of the monk in such a house as that of Gloucester. The life led in most of the great communities was a hard and austere one. In all times there were, of course, bad monks and ill-regulated communities, but quiet, scholarly research goes far to disprove the assertion that this class of monastics made up the majority of the "religious," even at the era of the general dissolution in England in the sixteenth century.

Very weighty indeed are the words contained in the preamble to the famous Act of Parliament of A.D. 1536, suppressing the three hundred and seventy-six smaller monasteries. They are words which, before they were embodied in the preamble of so important an Act of Parliament, had been evidently well weighed by the great enemy of the monastic system, and must be pondered over before any loose and general expressions concerning the laxity, the idleness, and the vices of the monk of the first years of the sixteenth century are acquiesced in. The preamble runs as follows: "The King's most royal majesty . . . considering also that *divers great and solemn monasteries of this realm, wherein* (thanks be to God!) *religion is right well kept and observed.*" These remarkable words, applied to the greater and more important monastic houses, promulgated by King Henry VIII. at the moment when the great suppression was formally entered upon, must ever be borne in mind by the just, fair-minded historian.

We lay emphasis, then, upon our assertion that the life of a monk was a hard and austere one at best. That daily life we have sketched. It was, indeed, sweetened and beautified with few of those luxuries men are ever accustomed to associate with modest comfort and happi-

ness. The diet, even on the non-fasting days, was, as a rule, coarse and monotonous. An examination of the diet-rolls of the religious communities, some of which have come down to us, curiously show us how freely condiments such as mustard were used in the refectories, so tasteless and often repugnant were the dishes, largely composed of fish, set before the community.

In the climate of Northern Europe, especially in the damp and chilly atmosphere of England, during much of the year the monk must have suffered acutely from cold. The abbey itself was unwarmed, and there were but few fires kept up in any monastery.

Any one who has had practical experience of the study-carrels of the famous Gloucester cloister, so often cold and damp, cannot help wondering how study, or writing, or illuminating the exquisitely written books, could have been carried on under such adverse circumstances.

Again, few and monotonous were the recreations of the monks. The chief of those was the pacing up and down the little walks of the garth of the cloister, or of the somewhat larger garden or orchard, or of the quiet God's acre where they were all one day to lie. In some "houses" the monk was suffered by his superiors to possess and amuse himself with strange pet animals, such as apes, peacocks, falcons, and even tame bears, and the Consuetudinary of S. Swithun's at Winchester tells us that the cellarer had the special care of these strange pets[1] of the brotherhood. The only approach to ease and comfort was to be found in the tender provisions of the great founder of the order for the sick and dying, and for those monks who were literally worn out by long and patient service. We have seen how faithfully the loving thought of

[1] Animalia a diversis fratribus per multa tempora acquisita.

Benedict found expression in the elaborate and beautiful infirmary buildings.

The pre-eminent services which monasticism, of which the great Benedictine order was the chief exponent, has rendered to mankind, all fair historians, all serious, unbiassed critics, would unite in acknowledging. Not to travel further back than the eleventh century, we find the monk the principal agent in the marked revival of religion for which that remarkable age was so notorious He was, too, the principal agriculturist in that period when the western world began to recover from the long and weary series of invasions, raids, and barbarian devastations. As time went on, the monk of the twelfth and following centuries was the great artist alike in architecture as in painting and sculpture. Equally distinguished was he also in all the subsidiary arts of the goldsmith and the engraver, bookbinder, &c.

The monk, too, was the only scholar. To him, as we have said already, we owe the preservation of all the treasures of ancient literature that we possess.

Like all human institutions and systems, monasticism, from various causes, some of which lay outside itself, gradually deteriorated from its original earnestness and vigour, although even in its last stage of existence—we are speaking here of English monasticism particularly—it was still a mighty living power. The words of the writer of the dry "Durham Rites"—no rhetorician, no fervid apologist of the system—deserve to be quoted as a friendly contemporary's cold and measured estimate of monastic life at the close of the fifteenth century. He speaks of the doings of a great religious house as just and true. "It was alwaies most virtuouslie occupied, never

idle, but either writing of good and godly wourkes, or studying the Holie Scriptures, to the setting furthe of the honour and glorie of God, and for the edifienge of the people, as well in example of good life and conversacion as by preaching the worde of God. Thus you may se and perceave how the monnks and religious men were occupied in most godly writing, and other exercissis in auncient time." Monasticism has indeed a splendid record of service done to religion, to art, to letters, indeed to well-nigh everything that made life beautiful and desirable in a nation.

But when all their beneficent work, and the widespread influence of their stern, grave, austere life is acknowledged, the serious historian of the past, as he reviews the great monastic movements which emphatically stirred and influenced, and in many respects blessed mankind, is compelled to recognise one cardinal error which undoubtedly coloured all monasticism, and which, too, is inseparable from the monastic ideal. The teaching of great monks like Lanfranc and Anselm, at the close of the eleventh and beginning of the twelfth centuries, has been well summarised by an eminent teacher of our day: "The hard, stern *sæculum* (the age) was unmanageable and uncontrollable. Those who believed in Christ's teaching might be honest in *leaving the wild tumult without,* and by adopting the monastic profession, secure ports of refuge and shelter, where men might find the religion which the conditions of active society seem to exclude. . . . A man who wanted to serve God with all his heart had little choice but to be a monk. . . . Monasteries were to be places where the search after peace and light and purity, and the conquest of evil, were made the objects of human life."[1] But this teaching ignored to

[1] Dean Church of S. Paul's, "Life of Anselm."

some extent, if it did not contradict, the solemn prayer of the Founder of Christianity: "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil."[1] The result of this central idea of the monastic life was to beget a spirit of stern exclusiveness among the "religious." Their *own* salvation, their *own* safety, with little reference to that of the world outside, was indeed what the true monk aimed at. "Self-centred, having few interests outside those cloister walls where they proposed to pass their lives, under the shadow of which they hoped to die, they regarded themselves as a chosen band, they believed themselves to be moving heavenwards as a company, and all together. The whole notion underlying their existence was that of each helping the other within the narrow limits of the community. On the other hand, their religion had hardly any outward tendency. They had no vocation to save the outer world. The monks hardly realised that those outside were their brethren, hungry and naked, full of needs and sufferings. The provision for their stately church, their community, their administration, made them hard and unfeeling towards others, and this was fostered and aggravated by their own firm belief that they were, in a sense, especially God's elect, the heirs of safety here and of salvation hereafter."[2]

Not that charity, alms-giving, relief to the poor and suffering, was by any means ignored in the monastic life, but these poor and suffering had rather to seek out the monastery. The monastery, as a rule, scarcely thought

[1] S. John xvii. 15.

[2] Dean Kitchen (of Durham), notes on the Obedientiary Roll of S. Swithun of Winchester.

it its duty to seek for the poor, the wretched, the ignorant. No one, however destitute and helpless, it is true, ever knocked in vain at the door of a monastic house; but these sad-eyed ones had to knock first. The monk sought not for them. There were, of course, many splendid exceptions to this monkish selfishness, for this it was. An abbot of Epternach, who died in A.D. 1106, for instance, wrote the following remarkable words—words which no doubt found an echo in the heart, if not in the speech, of many of his brother-abbots: "It matters not that our churches rise to heaven, that the capitals of their pillars are carved and gilded, that our parchment is tinted purple, that gold is melted to form the letters of our MSS., and that the bindings of these precious MSS. are studded often with gems, if we have no care for the members of Christ, and if Christ Himself lies naked and dying before our doors." [1]

Another distinguished contemporary of S. Hugh of Cluny in the eleventh century, Abbot William of Hirschau, laboured, we read, in good earnest for the insane poor. The great Benedictine abbey on the Loire, one of the daughter-houses of Cluny, received its famous name of "La Charité-sur-Loire" as a general recognition of its conspicuous deeds of love. But in spite of these and many other noble exceptions, the monk as a rule was, as we have stated, sadly self-centred, "sublimely" selfish.

Monastic Christianity, it has been well and truly said, finds its most complete expression in that little manual of devotion put out by an unknown writer of great power

[1] Quoted by Montalembert, "Monks of the West," book xviii chap. vi., from "Flores Epitaphii Sanctorum," ap. Mabillon, Ann. l. lxxi. 23.

in the fifteenth century, known to all men as "The Imitation of Christ." The book is beautiful beyond expression, breathing throughout, thoughts at once noble and saintly, but the name is strangely misleading. Emphatically it is *not* the imitation of Christ. "Its boundless popularity reminds us," said Dean Milman of S. Paul's, "that it supplies some imperious want in the Christianity of mankind, but, like monasticism, of which it is the perfect exponent, it is absolutely and entirely selfish in its aims, as in its acts. Its sole, single, exclusive object is the purification, the elevation, of the individual soul, of the man absolutely isolated from his kind, with no fears, no hopes, no sympathies of our common nature; he has absolutely withdrawn himself, not only from the cares, the sins, the trials, but from the duties, the moral and religious fate of the world."[1]

It was the consciousness of this grave error, of this fatal lack in the ordinary conception of monasticism, which suggested to Francis of Assisi, and in a somewhat modified form to Dominic, in the early years of the thirteenth century, the idea of founding the Mendicant orders. The Benedictines, including, of course, the Benedictine offshoots, the Cluniacs and Cistercians, and numerous orders more or less their imitators, were rarely missionaries. They seldom touched, and made few real efforts to touch, the masses of uncared-for souls living, dying at their gates. The acknowledged aim, on the other hand, of the Mendicant friars, including the Franciscans and Dominicans, and other less known orders, was *not* the salvation of the individual monk, but the salvation of others, through their agency. The marvellous and

[1] Dean Milman, "Latin Christianity," vol. vi., Bk. xiv., chap. iii.

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

Carrel in South Cloister

undreamed-of growth of the mediæval friars, and their wonderful popularity, tells us, with a voice none can mistake, that these men had found the true key to the people's hearts. In England the "coming of the friars" put off the downfall of monasticism for some two hundred years.[1]

[1] Compare the author's "Church of England, a History for the People," vol. ii. chap. xxxvi.

Appendix

APPENDIX A

THE TOWER OR BELFRY

Somewhat earlier than the date, A.D. 770, of Pope Stephen III.'s Bell Tower at S. Peter's at Rome, referred to in the text, Eddi, the friend and biographer of Wilfrid the great English bishop, writes of a Bell Tower erected at Hexham Abbey, of great height. Hexham Abbey was built about A.D. 674. Eddi, however, is not very accurate in his details. There appear to have been some important towers attached to, or in the immediate vicinity of some of the churches built by the Comacine Guild of Architects and Builders, under the Lombard rule of North Italy. The most perfect specimen of such a tower is the one belonging to S. Frediano at Lucca, erected at the close of the seventh or in the early years of the eighth century. Perhaps the oldest examples of very early Latin towers are the *round* towers of S. Apollinare in Classe, and of S. Apollinare Nuova at Ravenna, but both these are separated from the main building of the basilicas in question.

APPENDIX B

An interesting and by no means baseless theory has very recently been ably advanced, which ascribes to the somewhat

obscure Guild of Comacine Masters, or to their influence, "all that was architecturally good in Italy during the dark centuries between A.D. 500 and A.D. 1200. To them can be traced the building of those fine Lombard basilicas, S. Ambrogio at Milan, &c. . . . Their hand was in the grand basilicas of S. Agnese, S. Lorenzo, S. Clemente, &c., in Rome, and in the wondrous cloisters and aisles of Monreale and Palermo. Through them, architecture and sculpture were carried into foreign lands — France, Spain, Germany, and England—and there developed into new and varied styles, according to the exigencies of the climate and the tone of the people."[1]

The Guild of Comacine Masters, though perhaps the foregoing list of their architectural triumphs is somewhat overstated, unquestionably carried out considerable and admirable architectural work during the period of the Lombard supremacy in North and Central Italy, between A.D. 578 and A.D. 774. The scholarly writer above quoted considers that these Comacines were the direct successors of an old Roman "Collegium" or Guild of Architects and Builders, some of whom were in the first instance driven from Rome in the persecution of Diocletian, A.D. 302, and who were recruited by others of the same Guild who fled from Rome after the desolation brought upon the capital of the world by the repeated terrible incursions and raids of the Goths and Vandals in the fifth century.

Como, and the Comacine island in the lake where this famous Guild established itself, was a Romano-Greek colony; it possessed the rights of a Roman municipium, and was a district which might be termed a privileged territory—some even style it a republic. In the troubles of the fifth and sixth centuries it preserved its semi-independence, and when eventually it fell under the domination of the Lombards, its Guild of Architects and Artists was protected and patronised by the Lombard kings, and under their powerful shadow flourished

[1] "The Cathedral Builders: the Story of a great Masonic Guild." By Leader Scott. London, 1899.

and worked through the period of the darkest days of the barbarian raids.

Among the conquests of Charlemagne in the later years of the eight century, the Lombardic kingdom, which had endured for some two centuries, was included. The Comacine Guild, however, did not suffer from the change of masters, and the Lombard architects (the Comacine Guild) were probably largely employed by the great Emperor in various parts of his vast dominions in the church-building work which was a distinguishing feature of his reign.

After the death of Charlemagne, A.D. 814, troublous times again soon set in, and the long period of confusion, trouble, and anarchy which endured for a century and a half to two centuries effectually put a stop to all great architectural work throughout the West.

During the darkest age the Comacine Guild of Freemasons "hybernated"—to use the term of the above-quoted writer—but they lived on, preserving the secrets and traditions of the craft. What works of art were carried out in this dreary age between A. D. 814 and A.D. 1000, were due to this brotherhood of artists, builders, and masons — Freemasons as they styled themselves—apparently, as we have stated, the direct successors of an ancient Roman "Collegium" or Guild of Masons.

Our author traces the existence and work of the famous Comacine Guild in Italy all through the Middle Ages, when Romanesque work had gradually given place to what is termed Italian-Gothic, and still later, through the Renaissance period of the last years of the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries.

Now, without accepting the very broad assumptions and far-reaching deductions of the interesting and suggestive study to which we are referring, the following points seem to have been fairly established:—

(1) A strikingly able guild of architects and masons existed at Comacina (Como), and carried out some very remarkable

works in North and Central Italy during the period of Lombard supremacy, A.D. 568–774. Nor does there seem any reason to question the employment of this "Comacine" guild by Charlemagne in his very considerable church work in different parts of his vast empire.

(2) Considering that the more famous early church-builders in foreign lands—such as Benedict Biscop and Wilfrid in England (end of the seventh and eighth centuries), Boniface in Germany (in the eighth century), and S. Guillaume of Dijon in France, and especially in Normandy (early in the eleventh century)—seem to have drawn their architects and masons largely from Italy, it is at least probable that the Italian portion of the architects and masons employed by these church-builders belonged to this Comacine Guild.

(3) Their existence and work in Italy all through the mediæval period, *after* the eleventh century until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, is undoubted.

More than this, it would seem hazardous, in the present state of knowledge on this subject, to concede to the Comacine Builders.

INDEX

ABBEYS rivalled by cathedrals, 122 *ff.*
Africa, form of altar in, 220
Aldred, Bishop of Worcester, 71 *f.*, 86, 88
Alfred the Great, 42 *f.*
Altar : "Jesus" Altar, or Altar of the Holy Cross, 106 ; place, 210 ; original form, 211 ; in the Catacombs, 211 *ff.;* High Altar in E. and W. Church, 220 *f.*, 229, 243 ; after the Peace of the Church, 222 *f.* ; appearance, 225 ; curtains, 222, 226 *ff.;* material, 228 ; number, 229 *f.;* magnificence, 231 ; ornaments, 231 *ff.;* loss of original appearance, 234 ; innovations, 235 ; mentioned in New Testament, 237 ; not mentioned in Prayer Book, 237 ; Puritan destruction, 238 *f.;* present use, 240
Andrewes, Bishop, on the Eucharist, 238
Anselm, 33, 79 ; quoted, 302
Apse, 154 *f.*
Art and the Virgin, 252
Assisi, Francis of, 336
Augustine, 237
Augustinian canons, 30

BALL-FLOWERS, 145
Baronius, Cardinal, 19
Basilica, 2 *f.*, 134 *ff.*, of S. Paul-without-the-walls, 137, 153, 223; of S. Peter's, 223; symbolism of, 225
Belfry, 268. *See* Appendix A, 338
Bells, use, 270 *ff.;* introduction, 274 ; history, 281 *ff.;* ornaments engraved on, 284
Bells of Gloucester Cathedral, 283 *ff.*
Benedict Biscop, 182
Benedictines, 23, 25, 30, 48 *f.*, 70, 336
Beornwulf of Mercia, 70, 88
Bernard of Clairvaux, 41, 103, 251, 272
Berno, Abbot, 231 *f.*
Bishoprics transferred to popular centres, 50
Books, writing of, 299 ; illumination of, 299
Bradestone, Lord, and the east window of Gloucester, 206
Bruno of Toul : *see* Leo IX.
Byzantine churches, 138

CALIXTUS, S., cemetery of, 216
crypt of, 216
Canopies, 197 *f.*, 209
Canute, 28, 42, 47, 50, 61, 70, 88
Carilef, William, 53, 57, 92

Index

Catacombs, 2, 211 *ff.*; oratories in, 216; restoration of, 217
Ceawlin, 69
Celibacy in Roman Church, 50
Chalcidicum, 136
Chapter-house, 312
Charlemagne, 9, 11, 13, 46, 61, 183
—— capitularies of, 220
Charles Martel, 8
Chartres, 102, 184, 191, 193 *f.*, 235
Chivalry, origin of, 247
Choir: a mediæval feature, 153, 158; early specimens, 154 *f.*; enclosure of choirs, 162 *f.*; description of a fourteenth-century choir, 163 *f.*; subsequent changes in plan, 166; choir of Gloucester, 167 *ff.*; veil of perpendicular tracery, 172 *ff.*; vaulting, 174 *f.*; neglected in seventeenth century, 176
Chrysostom, S., 237
Church building in the East, 4 *f.*; in the West, 4, 34 *ff.*, 47 *f.*, 51 *f.* (England), chap. ix., 122 *ff.*, 260 *ff.*
Church, Dean, quoted, 233 *ff.*
Cistercians, 30, 48, 184
Clement, Bishop, 17
Cloisters: genesis of, 289 *ff.*; cathedral, 292; use, 293, 298 *f.*; place, 294; adornment, 296 *ff.*; examples, 296; libraries, 299 *ff.*; writing and copying in, 303; at Gloucester, 291, 294, 296 *f.*, 300, 304; scene of art work, 304 *ff.*; schools in, 306 *ff.*; roof, 309; walls, 310; south, 311; east, 311; north, 314 *ff.*; west, 319
Cluny, Abbey of, 23, chap. v., 32 *f.*, 38, 59, 139, 231, 242, 321
Colouring in mediæval churches and abbeys, 97 *ff.*; its oriental origin and western application, 102 *f.*, 180; traces in Gloucester Cathedral, 96 *f.*
Comacine masters: Appendix B, 338 *f.*
Confessionary, 77 *ff.*
Constantine, 2 *f.*, 61, 154, 218, 225; acts of, 222
Council: of Reims, 19 *f.*; of Mentz 20; of Epaona, 220, 228; second of Nice, 221; Anglo-Saxon, 221
Crusades, 48, 102 *f.*, 247
Crypt: origin, 77 *f.*; a Latin feature, 78 *f.*; not built after twelfth century, 81; notable examples, 82 *f.*; a service in the crypt at Chartres, 84 *f.*; the crypt of Gloucester, 86 *ff.*; story of the crypt, 89 *f.*
Cubicula, 214, 228
Cyprian, S., 237

DATES, tables of, xix. *f.*, 45, 71
De Caumont, quoted, 64, 195
Decius: *see* Persecution
Decorated architecture, 142 *f.*, 145, 197
Decretals, 17
Degradation of the Church in the tenth century: continental, 15 *ff.*; English, 42 *ff.*
Deorham, battle of, 69
Diocletian: *see* Persecution
Dome in architecture, 64 *f.*
Dominic, S., 336
Dugdale's *Monasticon*, 69
Dunstan, 45, 47, 81

Durandus of Mende (author of the *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*), 117, 125, 130 *ff.*, 221, 228, 232 *f.*, 235, 281, 285, 308
Durham, Rites of, 106, 113, 234, 285 *ff.*, 299 *f.*, 307, 311 *ff.*, 313 *f.*, 332 *ff.*

Eadmer, 79
Edward the Confessor, 28, 42, 47, 50, 71
Edward II. and Abbot Thokey, 147; tomb, 148; pilgrimages to his shrine, 148 *f.*
Eginhard, 138
Ely Cathedral, 58
Enamel paint, 186
End of the world expected, 20 *f.*
England in the ninth and tenth centuries, 43 *ff.*
Ethelred of Mercia, 69 *f.*
Eucharist, 211, 221, 215, 242 *ff.*; Bishop Andrewes on, 238
Eusebius, 2, 211
Eva, Abbess of Gloucester, 70
Evelyn quoted, 176

Feretory, 169
Flambard, Ralph, 57, 92
Flashed glass, 184
Franks, 8 *f.*
Freeman, E. A., quoted, 150 *f.*, 172
Fulchered, Abbot, 109
Fulgence, Abbot, 33
Fursæus, 81.

Galerius: *see* Persecution
Gardiner, S. R., quoted, 129
Gauburge, S., altar, 231; relics, 232
Gaul, 6 *ff.*, 12 *ff.*
Gauzon, 38, 150
Genseric the Vandal, 4
Gloucester: in the Roman era, 68; under the West Saxons, 69; foundation of the Abbey by Osric, 69; a royal city, 72, 146 *f.*
Gloucester Cathedral: originally a Benedictine monastery, 70 *f.*, 73, 264, 325 *ff.*; Romanesque architecture, 62 *f.*; date of earlier portions, 74 *f.*; nave, 58, 93 *ff.*; crypt, 86 *ff.*; south transept, 144 *f.*, 150 *ff.*; north transept, 152, 175; the choir, 167 *ff.*; the east window, 173, 204 *ff.*; windows, 186 *f.*; Lady Chapel, 244 *ff.*; tower, 278 *ff.*; bells, 283 *ff.*; organ, 287 *ff.*; cloisters, 291 *ff.*; library, 300; monks' cemetery, 312; chapter-house, 312 *ff.*; refectory, 317 *ff.*
Godefroy, Bishop of Amiens, 33
Gothic architecture, 64, 66; French and English schools, 142 *f.*; decay in seventeenth century, 176; revival in nineteenth century, 177, 190
Goths sack Rome, 217
Green, J. R., quoted, 43
Gregory VII. (Pope), 26, 29, 48 *f.*, 65, 76, 229
Gregory of Tours, 182
Grisaille, 188 *f.*, 193
Guilds of traders, 117 *ff.*, 125, 196; *cf.* Comacine masters

Henry the Fowler, 14
Herbert, George, quoted, 132
Herbert of Losinga, Bishop of Norwich, 58, 92
Hilda of Whitby, 69 *f.*
Hincmar of Reims, 182

Index

Horton, Abbot, 152, 175
Hugh, Abbot of Cluny, 23 *f.*, 33, 38, 76, 139, 150
Hugh Capet, 13
Hungarians : *see* Magyars
Huysman, quoted, 85, 103

Ignatius, quoted, 229 ; *cf.* 237
"Imitation of Christ," 336
Irenæus, 227

John, S., Revelation quoted, 219
John, S., Lateran, basilica of, 223
John XII. (Pope), 18
Jones, Inigo, 128
Justinian, 4 *ff.*, 64, 138

Kyneburga, Abbess of Gloucester, 70

Lady Chapel, 244 *ff.* ; of Gloucester, 99 *f.*, 143, 253 *ff.*
Lanfranc, 28, 49, 52 *ff.*, 65, 73, 76
Leo IX. (Pope), 20
Liernes, 174
Lights in mediæval churches, 107 *f.*
Liturgies, ancient, 246
Lombards, supremacy of, 6 ; destruction wrought by, 217

Mabillon, 18
Magyars, 13 *f.*, 22
Mahommedan invasions, 6, 8, 12
Martyrium, 156
Mary, The Virgin : veneration of, 244 *ff.* ; in art, 252 ; chapel at Gloucester, 253 *ff.*
Mayeul of Cluny, 23
Medallion windows, 191 *f.*, 196
Melchiades, 17
Michelet quoted, 12 *f.*
Milan, Edict of, 2, 4, 9, 61, 222
Milman, Dean, quoted, 16, 111 *f.*
Monasteries : artificial lights, 324 *ff.* ; administration, 325 ; officials, 326 *ff.*, 332 ; Act of Suppression, 330
Monastic churches, 60
Monasticism in England, 49 ; influence on social and religious life, 159
Monk : life in the cloister, 321 *ff.* ; daily rule, 322 *f.* ; literary work, 324 ; caricatures, 329 ; recreations, 331 *ff.* ; services to the world, 332
Morwent, Abbot of Gloucester, 93
Mystery plays in churches : origin, 110 *f.* ; in Latin and English, 111 ; description of the 'Resurrection' performance, 113 *f.* ; place in festal services, 115 ; performed by trade guilds, 117 *ff.* ; at York, Coventry, &c., 118 ; discontinued in churches and abbeys, 120 ; distinguished from miracle plays, 121 *n.*

Nave of Gloucester : built by Serlo, 93 ; originally decorated, 94 *ff.* ; screen and altars, 106 *f.* ; crowds, 108 *f.*, 125 *f.* ; scene of mystery plays, chap. xv. ; developed in thirteenth century, 125 ; desecration, 128 *f.* ; symbolism, 130 *ff.*
Nave of Norwich, 58 ; of Peterborough, 58 *f.*
Nero : *see* Persecution
Nicholas I. (Pope), 17
Norman Conquest, 55

Norman churches and abbeys, 55 *ff.*
Nôtre Dame, 194, 235

Odilo of Cluny, 23
Odo, Archbishop, 23, 79
Odoacer the Herule, 4
Oratories, earliest Christian, 2
Orders, religious, 30, 250; *cf.* Benedictines, Cistercians
Organ, 285 *f.*; of Gloucester Cathedral, 168, 287 *ff.*
Origen, 237
Osmund, 91
Osric, 69 *f.*
Otho the Great, 13 *f.*

Papacy: in the tenth century, 18 *f.*; under Gregory VII., 26
Papal legates, 49
Paschal II. (Pope), 29
Paul, S., quoted, 237
Paul, S., without-the-walls: *see* Basilica
Paul's Walk, 128 *f.*
Peace of the Church, 61, 78
Perpendicular or pointed architecture, 143 *f.*, 150 *ff.*, 170, 175, 177 *f.*, 196, 198, 255
Persecution of Christians: by Nero, 215; Decius, 215, 217; Diocletian, 2, 215, 217; Galerius, 216 *f.*
Peter's, S.: altars, 229; reredos, 230; *cf.* Basilica
Pisa, Cathedral, of 41
Piscina, 241; use, 242 *ff.*
Popular Christianity in thirteenth century, 127 *ff.*; 140
Pot-metal glass, 184 *f.*
Prayer, Common: Anglican Book of, 237
Presbyterium, 154, 156, 167
Prudentius quoted, 219 *f.*
Pusey quoted, 246

Quicherat quoted, 64, 78
Quignon, Cardinal, 251

Raoul Glaber, 1, 20 *f.*, 34, 51, 54, 158
Refectory in Gloucester Cathedral, 317 *ff.*
Reformation, work of the, 245, 249, 256
Reims, Cathedral of, 194
Reliquaries, 81
Renaissance glass, 198 *ff.*
Renaissance of the Church in eleventh century, 11, 21 *ff.*, 34 *ff.*, 65, 158 *f.*
Reredos or retable, 229 *f.*
'Reynolds' window in New College Chapel, 202
Richard of St. Victor, 131
Ridley, work of Bishop, 239
Robert the Magnificent, 28
Robert the Pious, 12
Rollo, 28
Romanesque: origin of the term and of the style, symbolism, etc., 62 *ff.*; influence on Gloucester Cathedral, 74 *ff.*; transition to Gothic, 142 *f.*; gloomy effect, 146
Rood-screens, 106
Roofs, perpendicular, 255

S. Apollinaris (church), 6
S. Clement (church), 155
S. Denys (church), 81, 164, 184, 191
S. Gall (abbey), 107, 138

Index

S. Gudule (cathedral), window in, 198
S. Mark (church), 39 *f.*, 65
S. Sophia (mosque), 4
S. Vitale (church), 6
Sacerdotalism in fourteenth century, 126 *f.*
Sainte Chapelle (Paris), windows in, 192
Saracens, 12; *cf.* Mohammedan Invasions
Scott, Sir G. G., quoted, 98 *f.*, 106, 142 *ff.*, 153
Screen, 105 *f.*, 163 *f.*, 166
Sculpture forbidden, 274
Septimania, 8
Sergius III. (Pope), 18
Sergius IV. (Pope), 18
Serlo, Abbot of Gloucester, 53 *f.*, 72 *f.*, 86, 88 *f.*, 91 *ff.*, 98, 108, 144, 171 *f.*
Severus, Bishop, 234
Silver stain glass, 185 *f.*
Simony in the Church, 19, 29
Size of Saxon and Norman churches, 63
Spire: *see* Tower
Stained glass: in Gloucester Cathedral, 179; a post-Romanesque feature, 180; beginnings, 181 *ff.*; development as illustrated by windows of Gloucester Cathedral, 186 *f.*; epochs in the history of, 191 *ff.*; in twelfth century, 191; in thirteenth century, 192 *f.*; in fourteenth century, 196 *f.*; in fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, 198 *ff.*; in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, 202; recent revival of the craft, 203
Stanton, Abbot, 152, 171, 173, 178
Suger, Abbot, 81
Sylvester II. (Pope), 19

TABLE, the Holy: *see* Altar
Tertullian, 237
Teuton invasions, 8
Tewkesbury Abbey, 58, 76, 93, 205
Theodora, 18
Theodoric the Ostrogoth, 5
Theophilus' *Diversarum Artium Schedula*, 183
Thokey, Abbot, 98, 144 *ff.*
Tower: 268; history, 268 *ff.*; notable examples, 275 *ff.*; Gloucester, 278 *ff.*; *cf.* Appendix A, 338
Transept: basilican origin, 135; use of the term, 136; developed in eleventh century, 138 *ff.*; double transept, 139 *f.*; south transept of Gloucester, 150 *ff.*; north ditto, 152, 175
Truce of God, 32

URBAN II. (Pope), 29, 48, 67

VAULT in architecture, 66 *f.*
Veil of altar, 125, 226 *ff.*
Veil of perpendicular tracery in Gloucester Cathedral, 172 *ff.*
Vikings, 9, 11 *f.*, 14 *f.*, 22, 28, 42 *ff.*
Viollet le Duc quoted, 99 *f.*, 118, 131, 153 235
Visigoths, 8

WALLER, F. S., quoted, 87, 94 *ff.*
Waltham Abbey, 47
Westminster Abbey, 47

Index

"White Robe of Churches" explained, chap. vi.
Wilfrid of York, 182
William the Conqueror, 28, 43, 49, 52 *ff.*
William the Pious, 23
Willis, Professor, quoted, 172 *f.*
Windows: *see* Stained glass
Wotton, Sir Henry, quoted, 176
Wren, Sir Christopher, quoted, 176
Wulstan, Bishop of Worcester, 91
Wygmore, Abbot, 98, 106, 145 *f.*, 150 *f.*, 209

York Minster: stained glass, 184, 189, 193

THE END

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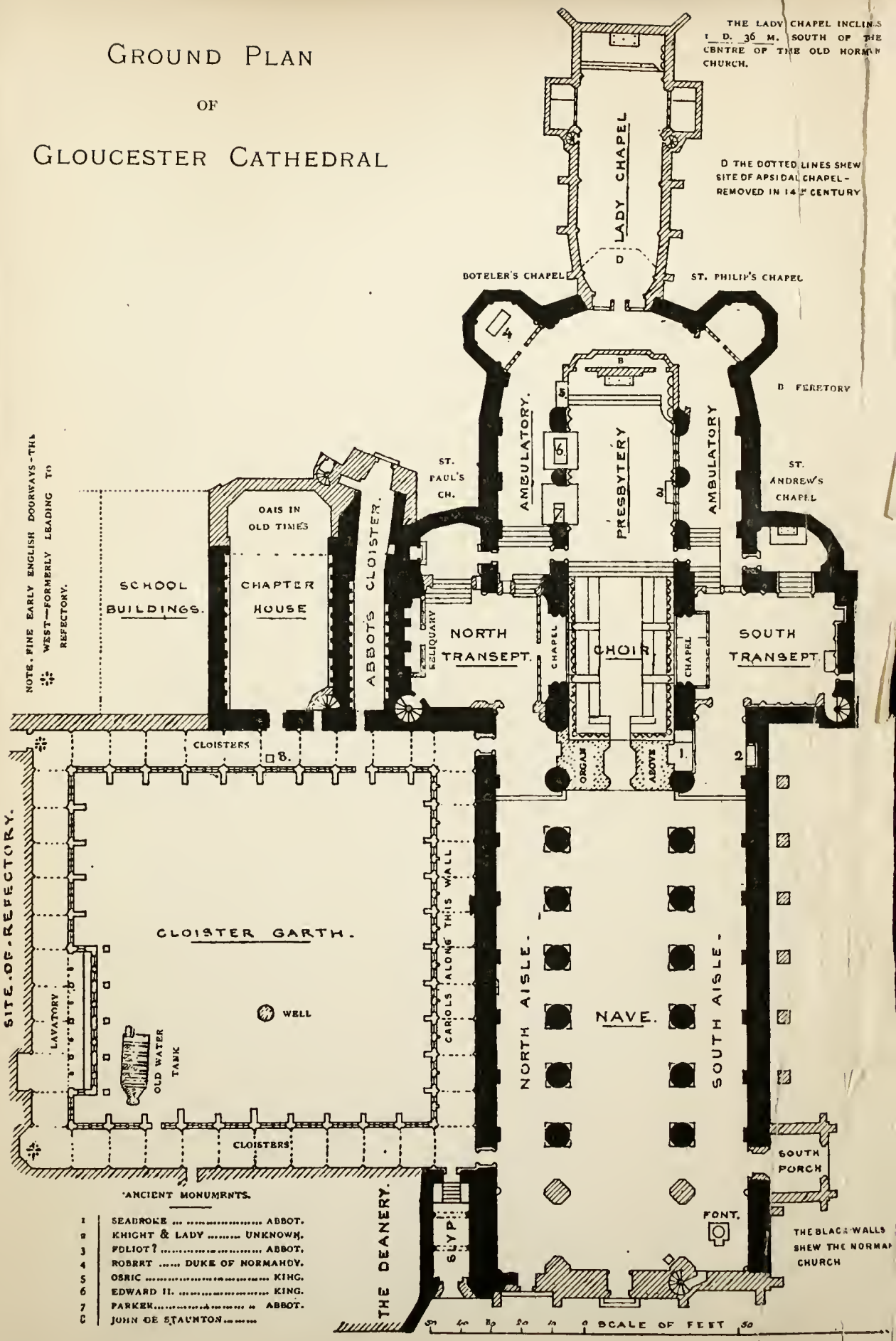
GROUND PLAN OF GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL



ANCIENT MONUMENTS.

1	SEABROKE	ABBOT.
2	KNIGHT & LADY	UNKNOWN.
3	FOLIOT?	ABBOT.
4	ROBERT ..... DUKE OF NORMANDY.	
5	OSRIC	KING.
6	EDWARD II.	KING.
7	PARKER	ABBOT.
C	JOHN DE STAUNTON	

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